Daily Report

Latin America

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FBIS-LAT-92-037 *25 February 1992*

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Haiti

A Port-au-Prince radio report states that the agreement reached between deposed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and a Haitian National Assembly delegation will only be effective "if it is accepted by the authors of the 30 September military coup." The agreement provides for Aristide's return as constitutional president within "a reasonable time frame and for the formation of a provisional government led by Communist Rene Theodore." A report by Bonaire radio states that there has also been "some sort of disagreement between Mr. Theodore and Mr. Aristide, and the agreement may be temporarily on hold."

El Salvador

San Salvador TV reports that the FMLN has threatened to "use surface-to-air missiles against warplanes overflying rebel positions." Rebel Commander Hercules noted that the "government has said the planes flying over the guerrilla positions belong to the Honduran Air Force." Hercules stressed that the "explanation is not satisfactory and that the government must clarify this situation, which could create a serious crisis for the peace agreements." San Salvador Radio reports that the ONUSAL has confirmed "the aircraft that flew over Morazan Department were not Salvadoran Air Force planes."

Honduras

The German news agency DPA reports that "The Honduran Armed Forces have denied that national military planes overflew camps in Salvadoran territory where guerrillas of the FMLN are concentrated."

Colombia

On 24 February, the government "declared a state of emergency to deal with labor conflicts in the National Police and the public sector," NOTIMEX reports. The government also authorized salary increases.

Guatemala

On 24 February a bomb went off in front of the parliament building two hours before Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari was scheduled to land at Guatemala City airport, ACAN reports. The explosion is reported to have caused no casualties. Guatemala radio reports that on the next day, Salinas addressed the Congress of the Republic about the environment and bilateral relations.

Inter-American Affairs

The Honduran daily LA PRENSA prints the text of the San Pedro Sula Declaration, signed by the Central American vice presidents at their 18th meeting to "strenghthen the framework of the new integration system, which is crucial to Central American countries' balanced and sustained development."

Regional Vice Presidents Issue Declaration

PA2402221492 San Pedro Sula LA PRENSA in Spanish 22 Feb 92 p 4

["Text" of the "San Pedro Sula Declaration," signed by the Central American vice presidents at their 18th meeting in San Pedro Sula, Honduras on 20 and 21 February]

[Text] The presidential designate of the Republic of Honduras and the vice presidents of the Republics of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua met in San Pedro Sula, Honduras on 20 and 21 February 1992 to strengthen the framework of the new integration system, which is crucial to Central American countries' balanced and sustained development.

We are pleased with the agreements issued at the Central American presidential summit held in Tegucigalpa, Honduras on 12 and 13 December 1991, where the political, economic, and social challenges facing the region were studied. We, the vice presidential forum, reaffirm our decision to continue to follow up and support these agreements, based on our fundamental affinities, to provide answers that will satisfy the legitimate aspirations and needs of all Central American nations.

We reaffirm and support the establishment and consolidation of the Central American integration system. This system's objective is to integrate the area and make it a region of peace, freedom, democracy, and development within a framework of economic well-being and social justice.

We express our satisfaction with the recent organization and installation of the Central American Institute for Laws on Integration, which will be headquartered at the National Autonomous University of Honduras. This organization will study the legal forms that will provide a secure basis for the integration of all Central American countries and for cooperation between the latter and third countries to attain more thorough development.

We are pleased with the recent signing in Mexico of the Chapultepec agreements between the Salvadoran Government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front. These agreements are an effort by President Alfredo Cristiani and the Salvadoran people to attain peace in El Salvador. The agreements allow them to reconstruct the fraternal Central American country. We also wish to recognize the excellent UN support of that peace process.

We acknowledge and support the advances made by the peace initiative, which was prepared and promoted by Guatemalan President Jorge Serrano Elias, to end the 30-year armed conflict that has done so much harm to the Guatemalan people.

We reaffirm our democratic conviction by categorically repudiating the foiled attempt to destabilize the democratic system in Venezuela. Likewise, we express our solidarity with the democratic aspirations of all nations to freely elect their leaders, and we look forward to the prompt return of democracy to the Republic of Haiti.

We reaffirm our support of the Central American Parliament as a regional forum that will contribute to consolidating democracy and integration.

We recognize the efforts and achievements of the Central American countries and Caribbean Community Members Conference to establish a Caricom [Caribbean Common Market]-Central American consultation forum that will allow joint political, social, and economic initiatives.

We again stress our commitment to the thorough development of the social productive sector by strengthening and promoting the agreed programs and mechanisms between the region's countries.

We reaffirm our decision to struggle tirelessly against the scourge of drug trafficking that has so negatively affected our societies and especially our youth.

The vice presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua thank the noble people of Honduras and the government of President Rafael Leonardo Callejas Romero, and especially Your Excellency Jacobo Hernandez Cruz, presidential designate of Honduras, for his warm hospitality and wonderful attention.

Comment on Meeting

PA2402201392 San Pedro Sula LA PRENSA in Spanish 22 Feb 92 p 9

[Text] San Pedro Sula—During a news conference held on 21 February following the closure of the 18th meeting of Central American vice presidents, Guatemalan Vice President Gustavo Espina Salaguero said that blaming the Central American armies for the region's problems "is unfair, because these armies have been fundamental in keeping peace. It is fashionable to talk of reducing armies and to blame them for everything, disregarding the fact that they have been instrumental in preventing the spread of communism and securing peace in the region."

He also said that, in the specific case of his country, the Army has prevented the growth of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity, a rebel group that has been in existence for more than 30 years. The Guatemalan Army has fought alone, he said. At present, the Army has only "one and a half helicopters" to "fight this small group."

At the end of the meeting, several of the participants discussed the talks and expressed their views on subjects of interest in the region.

Costa Rican Vice President German Serrano Pinto lauded the integration efforts, although his country has not joined the Central American Parliament [Parlacen] "because some legislative circles have doubts about the organization." "We are moving along a slow but safe path," he said.

Referring to the suit Nicaragua filed against Honduras at the International Court of Justice, Nicaraguan Vice President Virgilio Godoy said: "It is being handled at high levels. The problem will be solved in a relatively short time."

Honduran presidential designate Jacobo Hernandez Cruz described the meeting as encouraging and favored reinforcing Parlacen to expedite the integration.

Parlacen president Roberto Carpio Nicolle of Guatemala expressed satisfaction with area peoples' willingness to consolidate the union. "I wish we could be united immediately and thus recover the lost time," he said.

Roberto Herrera Caceres from Honduras is in charge of Parlacen's integration efforts, and he also participated in the news conference. He spoke about the prospects that San Jose VIII, the ministerial meeting of Europe and Central America to be held in Lisbon next week, holds for the region. He said the region's countries will seek mechanisms to establish a new interregional cooperation agreement during the meeting.

Herrera mentioned the possibility that the European Investment Bank can offer loans to Central America. These loans would be used for development purposes. "We expect a greater degree of cooperation," he said.

Cuba

Raul Roa Comments on UN Human Rights Report

PA2102163492 Havana Radio Havana Cuba in Spanish 0100 GMT 21 Feb 92

[Telephone interview with Vice Foreign Minister Raul Roa Kouri in Geneva by Francisca Calvo in Havana on 20 February—live or recorded]

[Text] [Calvo] Cuba rejected on 20 February the report by the so-called special representative on human rights in Cuba because his role is considered spurious, null and void, and lacking in political and moral validity, according to Cuban Vice Foreign Minister Raul Roa Kouri, who represents our country at the sessions of the Human Rights Commission that are currently under way in Geneva. What can you tell us about this?

[Roa] You know Cuba rejected the 1991 resolution asking the UN secretary general to appoint a special representative because it was intended to discriminate against our country. The appointment of a special representative is always done when there is a persistent situation of flagrant and large-scale human rights violations. In other words, like South Africa, the Arab territories occupied by Israel, Chile during Pinochet's regime, Argentina during the military dictatorships, Guatemala, or El Salvador.

Cuba cannot possibly allow itself to be treated like those countries because there are no human rights violations in our country. We could not accept the appointment of a special representative. The report by the UN secretary general's special representative —far from being objective, impartial, and factual like the report issued by the mission that visited our country at Cuba's invitation in 1988 or the secretary general's own report of 1991—contained considerations and conclusions that, frankly, are absolutely unrelated to the real situation in Cuba. The special representative's report was strongly rejected by our delegation.

[Calvo] Vice Foreign Minister Roa Kouri, what information did the so-called special representative have for his report on the alleged human rights violations in Cuba?

[Roa] He essentially based his conclusions and viewpoints on information obtained from Cuban counterrevolutionaries living in the United States. He considers these organizations to be serious, but they have actually been notorious throughout the years for their position against the Cuban revolution. He also based his conclusions on statements that he claims were sent by persons living in Cuba to Cuban organizations—not Cuban organizations, turncoat organizations—outside Cuba. In other words, he actually refers to the small counterrevolutionary groups that operate in Cuba under the CIA's orders—which we know perfectly well—or which follow guidance of Western embassies.

[Calvo] We understand you also mentioned the Cuban revolution's principal achievements in the face of the defamation by the so-called special representative that accused Cuba.

[Roa] Yes. I referred to the social and economic achievements of the Cuban revolution. In other words, unlike other parts of the world, in Cuba we do not have hungry children, child prostitution, or children without schools or teachers. It is obvious that Cuba has no social outcasts, such as the prostituted women, men, and children who exist in other Third World countries. Furthermore, everyone in Cuba has a right to health, work, and education—something that does not exist in other Third World countries and not even exist in many so-called First World countries. We must say that in the United states, the right to work is not recognized as an inalienable human right. In Cuba we do not have abandoned and homeless people.

That is what I said. In summary, I said the Cuban people's quality of life was unequaled by any of the southern countries. In addition, quality of life in Cuba is comparable to any of the so-called First World countries. Cuba is substantially different because there is no gap between rich and poor because no one is rich. In Cuba there is a social solidarity that no other country in the world has today, except perhaps in socialist countries such as the PRC or Vietnam. There is no society in the world that is so egalitarian, integrated, and free of all types of discrimination as Cuban society.

[Calvo] Regarding Cuban charges of human rights violations committed by the United States every day, not only there but worldwide, has there been a response from the Human Rights Commission?

[Roa] The commission has been for many years an instrument with which the powerful countries try to impose their positions on the weak and poor countries, the countries of the south. In reality, this commission does not have any moral authority to talk about human rights.

Now it is the criteria of the powerful countries that prevails. Those powerful countries only talk, pontificate, and make pompous speeches about respect for human rights in the rest of the world. But not in the First World, not where there is exaggerated chauvinism or racism that forms a pattern similar to the one existing before World War II.

Now we are seeing those same situations recreated in Europe in the same countries that spawned Nazism and Fascism. It is also seen in the United States, the leading violator of the rights of blacks, Indians, Hispanics, and many other citizens, as well the rights of other peoples such as the Cuban people. They have imposed an economic, financial, and commercial blockade that violates our people's rights.

Our commander in chief recently noted how a division of a U.S. company refused to sell us a product necessary to save the life of Sergeant Quintosa, murdered by

persons who sought to emigrate illegally from Cuba via the Tarara Nautical Base. These persons also viciously murdered Sergeant Quintosa's three companions who were guarding the base. They did it with the objective of reaching the United States and being received as heroes, like all those who leave the national territory illegally and are welcomed as political refugees.

This is a commission in which the human rights problem only works to condemn Third World countries, but it is never spoken of ... [pauses] rather, it is indeed spoken of, but no resolutions are ever made regarding human rights violations in countries like the United States and other northern, rich, and powerful countries. I mean the countries of Western Europe, where there are many flagrant human rights violations.

These violations are never mentioned except in reports by nongovernmental human rights organizations and through the intervention of some countries like Cuba and other Third World countries that dare to say those violations do exist. Unfortunately, there are not many such countries. In today's world, the syndrome of fear of the only superpower prevails.

The Cuban Government and people speak with the voice of 100 years of struggle. That is why we have never minced words or been afraid to call things by their name.

Economic Difficulties in CIS, Romania Noted

FL2402155592 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1255 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] The second round of municipal elections have taken place in Romania with a low voter turnout. The opposition came out ahead of the leader of the National Salvation Front. In the last two years, the living conditions of Romania have decreased by 30 percent. The decrease was basically due to the increase in unemployment and inflation, a drop in wages, and an increase in prices.

CIS television stations have announced that the industrial production of the republics of the former Soviet Union fell to the same level as before World War II. The industrial production fell by more than 17 percent in January; the production of coal by 10 percent; and the production of oil by 12 percent.

Workers Relocated in Las Tunas To Avoid Layoffs

FL2402231492 Havana Radio Reloj Network in Spanish 2030 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] The 4,524 workers relocated in Las Tunas Province are an indication of the Cuban state's determination to not lay off a single worker during the special period. Of the aforementioned figure, 1,055 hold positions in their original work centers; 1,156 are involved in agriculture labor; 427 work in self-sufficiency projects; and 705 labor in reforestation, construction of tunnels, and other projects.

Carlos Bello Hernandez, director of the Labor Resources Department of the provincial labor directorate, reported that labor relocations in Las Tunas represents 2.8 percent of the total number of workers, a total of almost 160,000. The sectors most affected are the People's Government, the Construction, Sugar, and Transportation Ministries, as well the municipalities of Las Tunas, Puerto Padre, and Amancio Rodriguez.

Guantanamo Province Begins Baragua 92 Exercise

FL2402203492 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] From now until 19 April, the Guantanamo municipal defense councils will be activated, and production and service work centers will be called to attention to perfect mechanisms to fight criminal acts and promote the production of consumer goods. One of the main objectives of the Baragua 92 operation, which will be carried out starting today in Guantanamo, is to undertake with revitalized vigor the tasks related to self-sufficiency of the 468 mountainous communities, villages, towns, and cities. It will be possible by using crops from municipal agricultural enterprises and peasant cooperatives and by increasing the number of family and collective gardens.

The Baragua 92 exercise in Guantanamo includes, among other things, an increase in the production of wine, fruit candy, preserves, soft drinks, nougats, and natural fruit juices produced in the homes or in mini-industries built in the Turquino plan zones of Guantanamo Province.

Raul Castro Addresses Military Council

FL2402175392 Havana Radio Progreso Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] Army General Raul Castro, second secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, has attended a meeting of the military council of the eastern region in Las Tunas. The defense preparation year was evaluated at the meeting. The reforestation plans and the accumulation of state and popular reserves were analyzed, and the construction of tunnels and fortifications was discussed. It was also possible to observe the sustained effort being made in all spheres of defense, while the presidents of defense councils of the participating provinces explained their progress in the self-sufficiency plans.

Comrade Raul Castro said this is a time to fight, and if we succeed in systematizing the work, exchanges of experiences, and initiatives, the solutions will come. In another part of his speech, the minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces said:

[Begin Raul Castro recording] You are witnesses to the actions of the last 10 years with the war of the entire people. All the instructions we issue have previously been sent to you. Sometimes we agree, sometimes not,

but we discuss them. When it is necessary to give an order, we give an order, but we have a method of discussing things. Why would I make a decision from Havana out of bureaucratic reasoning, which is the worst, without even asking the province if they can solve the problem [words indistinct].

When [Juan] Almeida [Bosque] said on 5 December 1956 there at [words indistinct] that no one here will surrender, with that, [words indistinct] confront the problems also. If I cannot find one solution, I will look for another. [end recording]

Raul Castro Praises Camaguey Province Initiatives

FL2402193592 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0100 GMT 22 Feb 92

[Text] During his tour of Camaguey, Army General Raul Castro, second secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba [PCC] and minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces [FAR], praised the province's initiatives in seeking solutions to the current difficulties imposed on our country. In the province, the efforts are directed towards the basic goals of self-sufficiency for each municipality, relocation of workers who have become surplus, improving the food distribution system, and the massive introduction of animal traction.

While presenting this information, Lazaro Vazquez, first PCC secretary for the province, said that the cooperation councils that exist in all municipalities, with the support of the Unified Vigilance and Protection System, play an important role in the coordination and systematization of the work. This has allowed the people to feel they are participating in solving problems.

Carlos Diaz, the first PCC secretary in Camaguey Municipality, said they have obtained encouraging results in his municipality. They are combating bureaucratic ideas, and they [words indistinct] rapid and rational [words indistinct]. Men from construction and transportation labor unions have formed two contingents and are already working in the vegetable crops of farms and basic units of urban production. These farms are in planting areas that have been recovered around the city and now total 60 caballerias. Others helping with the work are secondary school students who are involved in the agricultural areas of state agencies as the first option for a labor force. Meanwhile, young people have been relocated to new schools created from buildings and offices that were turned over by different institutions for that purpose.

The visitors were informed that a community board of directors was being introduced into this plan. The board is made up of individuals who deal most with the life of these groups. The board also supports the work of the people's councils to facilitate the management of food distribution and services.

The minister of the FAR and his delegation visited the central train workshop where they witnessed many solutions to problems in the sector. One innovation that stands out consists of adapting a gasogene to a locomotive. This allows the locomotive to have a range of 120 km using only 300 kg of coal. Soon it will serve the populace. In a large tank unit of the Eastern Army, Raul observed the results from 1991 in combat preparation and readiness and the engineering measures to protect equipment and personnel.

Finally, Raul and his delegation held a meeting with mobilized agricultural workers at the (Obango) Camp in Camaguey Municipality.

[Begin Raul Castro recording] We are free and independent. There are very few countries like ours in the world. We could probably count them on one hand. It is not enough to have a flag, a hymn, and an emblem. Nations more powerful than us must heed the orders of U.S. imperialism, which has become the sole world power on the earth today.

The Territorial Troops Militia [MTT], excluding the regular troops, have more tanks and rifles than all Batista's forces had. They have rifles, tanks, cannons, and various types of weapons. Just the MTT. That means that with the experience we have obtained during these last three years, we have accelerated our pace. It is a titanic struggle, and our commander in chief has lead the way.

He has spoken on television throughout these years, and he has educated us. He has lifted our spirits when others' spirits had fallen to the level of the asphalt by saying: We can survive, and we can develop ourselves. Two years ago he said that if we resisted, all the other countries and all honest people, communists or not, would be observing us. Today when everybody is changing and renouncing their principles, changing their names, we will not change the name of anything here. [end recording]

Haiti

Agreement Provides for Aristide's Return to Power

FL2402222892 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1700 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Report by Clarence Renois]

[Text] Two days of intensive talks at OAS headquarters in Washington and three rounds of negotiations were needed to reach an agreement on the Haitian political crisis, which arose from the 30 September coup that overthrew President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The agreement, which was called historic, was signed last night. It is a five-page document that sets forth new steps to put the democratic process in Haiti back on track. The

document was signed by deposed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who was restored today, and the two National Assembly presidents, Dejean Belizaire and Alexandre Medard.

The agreement, which was reached after two days of discussions under OAS auspices, provides for the formation of a new provisional government led by Rene Theodore pending National Assembly approval of his appointment; Father Aristide's acceptance of General Raoul Cedras as Army chief; a general amnesty for everyone, military and civilian, who participated in the coup; the lifting of the embargo imposed on Haiti after the ratification of the prime minister-designate; and the return of the deposed president within a reasonable time, no date having been set in the agreement.

It is a great victory for the Haitian people, a victory for democracy in Haiti. The OAS secretary general, Brazilian Joao Baena Soares, stated that Haitians have shown that they could reach an agreement. Former Colombian Minister Augusto Ramirez Ocampo, designated as a mediator in the Haitian crisis since the beginning of October, will issue a release.

A rather reserved statement from Haitian Senate President Dejean Belizaire said: We have done everything we thought possible to do. There was silence on the part of the deposed president, who is now restored on paper, and silence as well on the part of Prime Minister-Designate Theodore.

Perhaps the hardest part remains to be achieved—the application of the agreement here in Haiti, where the position of the provisional government, following the negotiations, is not yet known. The position of the sector clearly politically involved in the struggle against Aristide's return is also unknown, as is that of the Army. It should be recalled, however, that the commander in chief of the military, confirmed in his post through this new agreement, has said many times that the Army is ready to accept a solution found by civilians.

Assembly Ratification Sought

FL2402224892 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1600 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Excerpts] The agreement signed yesterday in Washington by deposed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and Haitian National Assembly representatives that implements a consensus government to normalize the situation in Haiti will be applicable, according to observers, only if it is accepted by the authors of the 30 September military coup. The document, signed under OAS auspices, provides for the return of Jean-Bertrand Aristide as Haiti's constitutional president within a reasonable time frame and for the formation of a provisional government led by Communist Rene Theodore, who was appointed by the president.

Aside from Jean-Bertrand Aristide, those signing the agreement included Senate President Dejean Belizaire and Chamber President Alexandre Medard.

No provisional government members or military chiefs attended the negotiations, which ended after three days of intense effort. [passage omitted] Mr. Belizaire, who consulted with Army chief General Raoul Cedras, stated: We have done everything we thought possible. I think this agreement is flexible enough to satisfy all political forces.

The agreement must be ratified by the National Assembly before it can go into effect. Rene Theodore did not sign the agreement because, in conformity with the convention, the National Assembly must first recognize President Aristide's right to appoint a prime minister.

Jean-Bertrand Aristide did not comment on the agreement, a five-page document in French that includes a general amnesty except for common criminals and a law on the separation of the police and the Armed Forces.

Agreement Possibly 'On Hold'

FL2502123992 Bonaire Trans World Radio in English 1130 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Talks at the Organization of American States headquarters in Washington produced an agreement on the return to power of ousted Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. He and the Haitian legislative leaders agreed to terms for a national consensus government with moderate Communist Rene Theodore as prime minister.

The latest information we have is that there has been some sort of disagreement between Mr. Theodore and Mr. Aristide, and the agreement may be temporarily on hold.

Christian Democrats Demonstrate Against Talks

FL2402200192 Port-au-Prince Radio Nationale in Creole 1100 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Excerpt] On 22 February the Haitian Christian Democratic Party staged a demonstration in front of the Legislative Palace in Port-au-Prince to denounce the embargo, all negotiations, and the return of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. [passage omitted]

Hundreds Attend Anti-Agreement Demonstration

FL2402230392 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1800 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] Today people numbering in the hundreds demonstrated in front of the Haitian National Assembly in Port-au-Prince to protest the agreement signed on 23 February in Washington as a negotiated solution to the crisis. The demonstrators, who pulled down the Haitian flag flying over the National Assembly, had come at the call of one of the fiercest opponents of the deposed president, Pastor Vladimir Jeanty, president of Haitian

Party of God, PARADI. Vladimir Jeanty has called the Washington agreement raving madness and has demanded the immediate arrest of the parliamentarians who signed it.

Oil Tanker Arrives in Port-au-Prince 22 Feb

FL2402234092 Port-au-Prince Radio Soleil Network in Creole 1200 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] An oil tanker arrived at the Port-au-Prince wharf on 22 February, but we do not yet know where it came from or the amount of oil it is carrying. According to trustworthy sources, the ship, called the (Captain Lucas III), did not come from a country participating in the embargo.

This is the third tanker of petroleum products that has arrived in Port-au-Prince since the beginning of the embargo. The first arrived on 28 November 1991, and a second arrived on 2 January. These petroleum products were bought in Europe.

It has been reported that many gas trucks were parked near a ship that came alongside not long ago on the Saint-Marc wharf, but so far no delivery has been made.

El Salvador

Guerrillas Protest Camp Overflights

PA2502044392 San Salvador Canal Doce Television in Spanish 0300 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Passages within quotation marks are recorded]

[Text] The Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, FMLN, on 24 February threatened to use surface-to-air missiles against war planes overflying rebel positions.

Commander Raul Hercules said the presence of those planes in areas of conflict seriously endangers the peace agreements.

Commander Hercules said the crisis in the joint working team is caused by two factors: the wrong interpretation of the agreements on the separation of forces, and the second one, which he considered dangerous, the flight of war planes over FMLN positions. He said this situation runs contrary to the agreements and could create serious problems.

[Hercules] "We have placed all our units on alert. If the situation gets critical, or more critical, we will open fire because this is really a threat against our concentrated forces. In addition, we demand a public statement from the Salvadoran Government in regard to those overflights."

Hercules said that of the 50 positions currently assigned to the FMLN, they will not occupy the 15 positions established for the second phase until the last minute, as all positions must be occupied simultaneously. He said they hope the necessary conditions and reciprocity will exist on the part of the government and the Armed Forces along with guarantees there will be no negative actions from groups opposed to the agreements.

[Hercules] "Once we concentrate at the 15 bases, the sick—I would say crazy—and reactionary members of the Armed Forces could try to take advantage of the situation and even try to annihilate our forces at the 15 bases or one of those bases."

Commander Hercules noted that the government has said the planes flying over guerrilla positions belong to the Honduran Air Force. He stressed that this explanation is not satisfactory and that the government must clarify this situation, which could create a serious crisis for the peace agreements.

General Mauricio Ernesto Vargas, deputy chief of staff, rejected the FMLN accusations that the Air Force is allowing its planes to fly over guerrilla camps in northern Morazan. Vargas said the peace agreements are verified by the UN Observers for El Salvador [ONUSAL] and that institution should determine if the Armed Forces has violated the agreements.

[Vargas] "There are ONUSAL observers in the Salvadoran Air Force who can confirm or determine which planes departed, what type of planes, where they were going, or if there were no such flights. Those accusations are unrealistic and are part of an ideological and propagandistic campaign to create conflicts of interest."

Vargas described Hercules' accusations as grave and irresponsible and reiterated that the military institution will guarantee compliance with the agreements that made possible the war's end.

[Vargas] "We believe violence, force, and irrational behavior are useless. We must use all mechanisms available to us, any regulations, procedures, or laws. No one should irresponsibly say we have ordered our forces to fire."

Vargas denied any crisis in the joint working team. But he admitted differences exist with the FMLN in regard to the mechanisms for the separation of forces and concentration of the rebels in the 15 positions established in the agreements.

After denying the presence of military planes in northern Morazan, Gen. Vargas said it is time to show confidence to strengthen the recently attained peace. He also warned that the Armed Forces will never accept blackmail or threats to overcome conflicts of interest.

FMLN Leader Joaquin Villalobos said the fact that Honduran military planes are overflying Salvadoran territory is worrisome. He added that ONUSAL must investigate the situation to determine responsibility and prevent confusion.

Commander Joaquin Villalobos quickly filed a protest to Copaz [National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace] on behalf of the FMLN against military planes' overflights of guerrilla camps. A few minutes later, [Deputy Defense Minister] Gen. Zepeda left the meeting for consultations, then returned to discuss the matter with Copaz members.

[Zepeda] "We can confirm they were not Salvadoran Air Force planes. It looks like they were Honduran Air Force planes. Since one of the incursions was deep into Salvadoran territory, we will have to decide what to do about the situation, which could result in a provocation or have other consequences."

The seriousness of this situation shows the importance of a verifying institution like ONUSAL and an organization for consultation and action like Copaz. In a few minutes a critical situation turned into an incident that will require special treatment.

[Villalobos] "There is always concern about why Honduran Air Force planes are doing this; whether it is a matter of internal problems, some situation in Honduras, or if it has to do with our country, which would be even more worrisome."

Copaz must also take care of pending matters, including the election of a police academy director and the calling of a socioeconomic forum.

ONUSAL Denies Overflight

PA2502125192 San Salvador Radio Cadena YSKL in Spanish 1209 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] UN Observers for El Salvador [ONUSAL] confirmed that the aircraft that flew over Morazan Department were not Salvadoran Air Force planes. Mario Zamoran, in charge of the ONUSAL information center, said that the group of military observers assigned to the Salvadoran Air Force reported that no flight plans were established over Morazan Department. The Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, however, through its Radio Farabundo Marti broadcast on 24 February, reported that since past [words indistinct] Armed Forces planes have been making flights over sectors of Guazapa Hill, as well as the Departments of Morazan, and Chalatenango.

Guatemala

Bomb Explodes Shortly Before Salinas Arrival

PA2402212592 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 2036 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] Guatemala City, 24 Feb (ACAN-EFE)—A bomb went off on 24 February in front of the parliament building shortly before the arrival of Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari to the country. The explosion did not cause any casualties but destroyed a vehicle.

The bomb exploded at noon, two hours before the plane carrying the Mexican president landed in Guatemala (at 1955 GMT). Among other activities, the Mexican president will visit Congress to participate in a solemn session.

Salinas will pay a 30-hour visit to Guatemala to discuss the political and economic cooperation between the two neighboring countries. He will reportedly meet twice, on 24 and 25 February, with Guatemalan President Jorge Serrano.

[Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish at 2034 GMT adds: "The National Police have reported that they defused two more bombs in the rector's office in San Carlos University in the capital. So far, no group has claimed responsibility for placing the bombs."]

Salinas Stresses Bilateral Relations to Congress

PA2502022092 Guatemala City Cadena de Emisoras Unidas in Spanish 0000 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari announced on 25 February that 11 cooperation agreements with Guatemala are to be signed to reach political, economic, and ecological balance. He spoke to the Congress of the Republic during a special ceremony. In his 15-minute speech, the distinguished visitor said he regarded the preservation of the environment as a priority, because it is the worst problem afflicting mankind at the end of the 20th Century.

In his speech before the full Congress, Salinas made it clear he wants to improve economic and political relations with Guatemala. We will take advantage of the new general reorganization in Latin America and increase our bilateral relations with Guatemala, Salinas said, to the applause of the lawmakers.

Government, Rebels Issue Peace Talks Communique

PA2502020392 Guatemala City Teleonce Television in Spanish 0330 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] Representatives of the government and the Guatemala National Revolutionary Unity, URNG, have ended a new round of peace talks in Mexico City. They agreed to ask the mediator and UN observer to draft a proposal to expedite the process.

The official delegation returned at 1530 on 23 February. The government and the URNG issued a press communique together with mediator Monsignor Rodolfo Quezada Toruno and UN Observer Francesc Vendrell. The document says pending issues concerning an overall agreement on human rights were discussed. Those issues include the Civilian Self-Defense Voluntary Committees [Comites Voluntarios de Auto-defensa Civil], mechanisms to lessen the people's sufferings as a result of the conflict, and guarantees of good treatment for prisoners and those who are wounded or out of combat within the framework of the internal armed conflict.

The mediator and UN observer will draft a new proposal on pending issues to facilitate an overall agreement on human rights. The possible participation of civilian groups in the peace process was also discussed.

Manuel Conde, head of the government delegation, commented on the meeting. He said the 30-day deadline given by President Serrano to the URNG to present an overall proposal was not discussed.

[Begin recording] [Conde] Some days ago President Serrano gave the rebels 30 days to present an overall proposal. However, we have not received any reply. The mediator has promised to deliver a proposal on mechanisms to expedite the process in the next few days.

[Reporter] Do you think the mechanism by which the mediator meets with each party individually is effective or is it delaying an agreement?

[Conde] We cannot say the mechanism is perfect. As with any procedure, there are times when it is effective, but there are other times when there can be difficulties. We believe that up to this moment, the mechanism has made it possible to advance to where we are now. Once we have completed the discussions on the current subject, it would be good to determine if we can continue using the mechanism for other subjects, or if we should hold plenary sessions. We believe that in small meetings we have been able to discuss some topics more deeply and freely. [end recording]

Rebels Deny Involvement in Drug Trafficking

PA2502024892 Guatemala City PRENSA LIBRE in Spanish 24 Feb 92 p 3

[Text] The Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity [URNG] has nothing to do with drug trafficking, according to guerrilla Commander Rodrigo Asturias, "Gaspar Ilom." He added: I can responsibly guarantee that no URNG forces have had anything to do with drug trafficking.

The rebel leader made the above statement during the "Free Encounter" [Libre Encuentro] program filmed in Mexico and broadcast 23 February by the Radio-Television Guatemala television station. Also participating in that program were guerrilla Commander Ricardo Rosales Roman, "Carlos Gonzalez;" Free Enterprise Chamber [CLE] President Dioniso Gutierrez; and CLE Vice President Jaime Camhi.

During the 90-minute program, Asturias indicated no URNG guerrilla group could possibly become involved in drug trafficking because they are all "totally controlled."

He added that to announce dates for the signing of a peace agreement "is to create false expectations," and that the guerrillas "have nothing hidden in their proposals." The rebel leader said they do not get international, Cuban, or Soviet funds because "we depend on our own resources." That is the only way to account for our existence two years after the collapse of socialism, he said. If we were not an independent force, we would not have survived.

Commander Rosales Roman noted the "revolutionary struggle is the best school in life," and that is why the guerrilla fighters can help rebuild Guatemala.

In their statements, the guerrilla commanders said the blowing up of energy towers constitutes "military sabotage," a selective and programmed activity that aims to engage military forces, and not economic warfare. "We do not do it willingly but because it is indispensable," Asturias remarked.

According to the guerrillas, the fact they are abroad does not estrange them from Guatemala because they feel "profound links" to the country. The guerrillas denied being Marxists Leninists, and said there is great prejudice against revolutionary thinking.

Asturias defined the army officers participating in the talks in Mexico as "very professional and capable men, with whom we can hold discussions. There is no longer a monolithic army, although we are concerned over some remarks that remind us of recalcitrant stands."

According to a dispatch by the proguerrilla news agency CERIGUA, the commanders did not attend the eighth meeting held in Mexico City last week by the National Reconciliation Commission, the government, and the guerrillas. The "Free Encounter" program was filmed on Thursday, 19 February, at a Mexico City hotel.

Honduras

Army Denies FMLN Overflights in El Salvador

PA2502042792 Hamburg DPA in Spanish 0303 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Tegucigalpa, 24 Feb (DPA)—The Honduran Armed Forces have denied that national military planes overflew camps in Salvadoran territory where guerrillas of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) are concentrated.

Honduran Army Spokesman Colonel Napoleon Santos said personnel from the UN Observers for El Salvador (ONUSAL) contacted Honduran Air Force officials to discuss the FMLN report.

Col. Santos said during air patrol missions, Honduran pilots were instructed by the Armed Forces High Command not to fly within 10 miles of the Salvadoran border.

The Honduran military spokesman said the military leadership is concerned by these FMLN reports. While the reports do not reveal intention, they may represent a guerrilla attempt at a "show of force."

Junior Officers Communique Berates Army Generals

PA2502042192 Tegucigalpa EL HERALDO in Spanish 22 Feb 92 p 4

["Text" of communique issued by the "General Jose Trinidad Cabanas Revolutionary Movement" in Tegucigalpa; date not given]

[Text] Distinguished members of the Higher Council of the Armed Forces (Cosuffaa):

Tegucigalpa,

We, who recently formed the group of officers called the Renovating Front of Junior Officers (Frenos), today renamed ourselves the "General Jose Trinidad Cabanas" Revolutionary Movement. We address the new members of the Cosuffaa so that they may conduct an in-depth analysis—to think as true soldiers of the fatherland, to defend the dignity of our Armed Forces, and to avoid civilian manipulation or politicization of the armed institution with a maneuver that is obvious to any visionary or intelligent military officer. This political maneuver, which was apparently approved by the U.S. Embassy, consists of replacing the position of Armed Forces commander in chief (and renaming it) minister of national defense and public security, thereby, making us puppets of any political party that comes to power. Consequently, such party would appoint as defense minister any colonel who directly or indirectly supports the political party that won the general election.

Friends from the National Party of Honduras [PNH] had informed us at several social gatherings that the PNH,

through its president, Celin Discua, recommended President Callejas please the U.S. Embassy by eliminating the post of commander in chief and appointing Discua's brother, General Luis Alonso Discua Elvir, defense minister. In addition, the PNH president recommended the president use whatever amount of money was required to buy members of the new Cosuffaa.

This is insulting and offensive in all respects. Only the excessive ambition of power and enrichment could be the decisive factors in this regard, because Gen. Luis Alonso Discua Elvir should be satisfied with his accomplishments and the honors he has received. He should not be thinking of staying in power four more years, because these PNH members stated that they would win the elections in 1993, supported by fraud or any other means.

Gen. Discua, why do you want to destroy the Armed Forces by trampling on your comrades, who have the same right, if not more, to become chief of the Armed Forces?

Why don't you and the other generals who were recently promoted sleep on it, and make way for other promotions in your military careers? [sentence as received]

You should remember the ambition of Gen. (Humberto) Regalado Hernandez, who wanted his term of office extended. You and other colonels from the Cosuffaa stopped him.

Why should only you and your so-called Council of Generals decide this delicate matter? You should respect the Armed Forces Basic Law and the Constitution of the Republic.

Will the result of your secret meetings last year be to orchestrate the appointment of distinguished members from the 12th class to the rank of lieutenant colonel in most battalions?

You, members of the "Little Council," should know well that the 12th class will now be unable to produce an Armed Forces chief, as it is necessary to be a colonel. Surely, you appointed them colonels to flatter them and receive their votes.

It should be pointed out that we are not against them because they are young military leaders, and we are still confident that they will not let this political maneuver pass. We are confident they will meditate well before approving or rejecting the intention of the "Little Council" of Generals to eliminate the post of Armed Forces chief and violate the Basic Law by reforming the Constitution of the Republic.

Let us all hold our heads high, as Jose Trinidad Cabanas did; let us act with dignity and honesty toward that great patriot, who died in poverty and without the stain of being a thief. Time will be our best ally.

If junior officers failed in Venezuela, here we will not fail. We will act with care; we will be ready and observe how things unfold but we will not tolerate the politicization of the Armed Forces.

You should make way for those who come after the sixth class. Enough of so much blackmailing and profiting from the "Little Council of Generals." In their secret meetings, acting as freemasons, they want to decide the fate of our Armed Forces. They are only interested in becoming richer.

To win or die

[Signed] "Jose Trinidad Cabanas" Revolutionary Movement

Nicaragua

Government Forces Leave Puerto Cabezas Region

PA2402205292 Managua Radio Catolica in Spanish 1100 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] Government Minister Carlos Hurtado has signed an agreement with delegates of groups that in recent days seized the towns of Puerto Cabezas and Waspan. Regional government leaders also signed the agreement. As a result of this agreement, antiriot forces and Army members have left the area.

The agreement calls for a security zone under the protection of the International Commission of Support and Verification. The government agreed not to use the public force. The rebels agreed to abide by the law.

The talks between the government, the Yatama [organization of members of the Miskito, Sumu, and Rama Indian tribes and of Creole groups], and the regional government delegates will continue on 26 February. The idea is to speed up the process for the autonomy of the northern region. Minister Hurtado met with more than 400 Yatama rebels and with regional government delegates. The most important Waspan installations were seized by the rebels in recent days. Two policemen died and several were wounded during the conflict, which almost resulted in a massacre when heavily armed antiriot and Army forces arrived in Waspan and Puerto Cabezas.

The atmosphere in Puerto Cabezas is tense but calm following the forced withdrawal of the Sandinist elements.

The Miskito population of Puerto Cabezas resent the Sandinist repression. Waspan is still being held by Yatama members. The Miskitos maintain their demand that their region's authorities be changed.

Panama

Arias Calderon Comments on Constitutional Reforms

PA2102212792 Panama City CRITICA LIBRE in Spanish 21 Feb 92 pp 1, 2

[Text] Doctor Ricardo Arias Calderon, first vice president of the Republic and president of the Christian

Democratic Party [PDC], and Doctor Cesar Quintero, former Supreme Court Justice, visited the Legislative Assembly Government Commission to state their opinions about the constitutional reforms recently approved by the parliament.

Dr. Ricardo Arias Calderon presented recommendations to 10 of approximately 58 articles, which were modified in the Constitution. Among them, he referred to Article 137 on the independence of the Electoral Tribunal. He said it would be convenient to restore two provisions. One of them will permit the Electoral Tribunal to present bills on electoral matters at the Legislative Assembly and the other will permit it to adopt measures regarding police services during the electoral period.

With respect to the demilitarization of public security, Dr. Ricardo Arias Calderon said that function should be a prerogative of the Legislative Assembly. He said in addition to determining the number of members of all branches of the Public Force [FP], the Assembly should determine the number of units of each police service branch.

Concerning the trial of the president of the Republic by the Legislative Assembly, Dr. Arias Calderon said the text should be maintained as it is in the current Constitution, because the reforms empower the parliament to try the president. On that issue, he said: "I suggest the text be left as it is at present so the contents under which the current government began to function be maintained." Here are the statements by Dr. Arias Calderon.

On the morning of 20 February, Dr. Ricardo Arias Calderon, first vice president of the Republic and president of the PDC, appeared before the Government, Justice, and Constitutional Affairs Commission of the Legislative Assembly to state his views on the constitutional reforms, whose approval is being discussed.

At the opening of his statements, Dr. Arias Calderon said the current period of constitutional reform is part of "a process of transformation of our Constitution, to make it more democratic and modern." He added that this "prolonged and complex" period has occupied the Assembly's attention on several occasions since May of 1990, including numerous consultations with civic and trade associations, as well as legal experts.

Arias Calderon explained: "The reforms being proposed do not belong to a party in particular, but they express the will of the democratic national forces to perfect our Constitution, which will continue to develop to the extent the country requires."

In his speech, the first vice president recommended the text of the reforms be improved in many ways.

With respect to the issue of public security, he recommended that Paragraph 17 of Article 153 establish that the Assembly should set the number of members of each branch of "the police services," not just the total number of FP members.

Regarding the Electoral Tribunal, Arias Calderon endorsed the addition of a paragraph to Article 137, granting that organization the authority to "order measures regarding the FP" during electoral processes. That will guarantee the absolute freedom of that organization. The purpose is to "ensure the independence of the Electoral Tribunal from the executive branch and to avoid the police being used for political purposes," he continued.

Concerning municipal administration, Arias Calderon defended the intention to authorize constitutionally that "a percentage of the National Treasury revenues, collected from taxes and fees, be assigned to the municipalities by law." In addition, he claimed that such a law should take into consideration "the origin of such income in the corresponding municipalities, regardless of where they are being paid." To treat all municipalities equally, he explained, two criteria should be established when assigning funds. The first criterion would be applicable to all municipalities in the country, while a second criterion would take into account the revenues generated by each municipality to the National Treasury.

Regarding the judicial branch and Article 211, the president of the PDC proposed the budget of that branch and the Attorney General's Office combined be of no less than four percent of the current government revenues. "Our people are constantly demanding that justice be served, as a solid basis of our new democracy," he said. "Those who want justice should be ready to provide adequate resources so the lack of resources cannot be used as a pretext for the lack of justice," Arias Calderon said further.

Regarding the Comptroller General's Office and Paragraph 2 of Article 276, he expressed support for the new text, not in the sense of eliminating the controls prior to transactions, but of assigning before and after controls to different institutions "by virtue of the wise republican and democratic concept of breaking up the powers so as to avoid arbitrary excess of power."

At the closing of his statements to improve the text of the reforms, the first vice president pointed out several other positive aspects of the same, namely the strengthening of human rights and the creation of the people's attorney or Ombudsman's Office to protect the rights of citizens from bureaucratic mistreatment; the definition of the relation between the Social Security Fund and the Health Ministry, within "a national system that will guarantee health to all the people" on the basis of the principles of coordination and reciprocal and equitable compensation; the opportunity to elect parliamentarians who represent Panama at international parliamentarian organizations, which will make it possible for Panamanians to "participate actively in Latin American integration movements, because we are a Latin American people;" the renaming of the "San Blas Intendancy" as the "Kuna Yala Intendancy," as a way to recognize the ethnic and cultural pluralism of our national identity; and the spirit that gives life to the reforms in the proposed preface,

which highlights the objective of "installing a state of law and a participative, pluralist, and civic democracy."

Minister Doubts Acts Committed by Terrorists

PA2402174892 Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish 24 Feb 92 p 32a

[Article by Elio A. Rujano M.]

[Text] Government and Justice Minister Juan Chevalier stated that he did not believe terrorists destroyed the electricity posts in the Hato Montana area in Arraijan. "Maybe there are some gentlemen who claim to be members of the 20 December Movement and want to take responsibility for anything that happens in the country," Chevalier stated. He added: "I, however, believe it was a criminal action"

On 20 February, unidentified people cut down two wood power poles approximately 2 km from the main entrance to the Inter-American Highway, at the Juan Demostenes Arosemena corregimiento in Arraijan. The act left several communities in the western Panama province area without electricity. Institute of Hydraulic Resources and Electrification personnel reported receiving repeated anonymous calls threatening such acts.

Chevalier stated that the fact the poles were cut down with an ax and not with explosives is evidence that it was not a terrorist action. The minister considered it a criminal action because the electricity blackout occurred at the same time a group of prisoners tried to escape from La Chorerra penitentiary, taking advantage of the lack of electricity in the area.

"We even found some bars that had been sawed and other such things at La Chorrera penitentiary," the minister noted. He also asserted that "perhaps, the two events are linked."

Argentina

Military Approves Participation in UN Force

PY2402180192 Buenos Aires Radio Nacional Network in Spanish 1500 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] General Martin Antonio Balza, Army chief of staff, has said that the presidential order to participate in the UN peacekeeping force in Yugoslavia encourages the Army's professional vocation. Balza added that the Army's subordination to the political power is a condition for professionalism.

Germany 'Pleased' With Release of Nazi Files

PY2402172092 Buenos Aires Radio Nacional Network in Spanish 1500 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] Germany's Ambassador to Argentina Karl Limmer [as heard] has said that his country was quite pleased with the Argentine Government's decision to open its files on former Nazi bosses who lived in Argentina. Limmer made the comments after accompanying a group of German legislators to a meeting with President Carlos Menem during his first day in Government House after 11 days out of the country touring Europe and Brazil. This is what the German ambassador said:

[Begin recording] The decision was received very well in the world, particularly in Germany and Israel. You know that for a long time we had problems obtaining information and detaining people who were tried in German courts. Argentina has cooperated in some cases. The last case was that of (Shlamberger). We were able to obtain his extradition to Germany in 1990. He was being tried in a German court. I think this is a gesture of exchange. I personally do not believe that [word indistinct] relations, as I understand those who committed war crimes. The files could be interesting to throw light on the history of these people who came to the country to help its development. I would be surprised if anyone finds a war criminal in Argentina we do not know about. This not only affects Germans; there are cases involving people from other countries. There is the case of a citizen from the Netherlands, for instance, who was sentenced in the Netherlands in 1989 and lives here [words indistinct]. [end recording]

This is what the ambassador said. This is the second time a delegation of German parliamentarians has visited the country. Delegation leaders said they are here to strengthen the links of friendship between Germany and Argentina.

* Political Ideology of Menem's Critics Viewed

92SM0244B Buenos Aires LA PRENSA in Spanish 22 Jan 92 p 7

[Report by Raul Oscar Abdala]

[Text] The critics of Menem's program do not support a single ideological and mental position; there is no homogeneity in this group, even though there may seem to be at times.

I believe that these critics fall roughly into three groups. In one group is the left, including Alfonsinism, its twin; in another, radicalism in a strict sense, along with the declining "orthodox" Peronism or Peronism "of Peron"; and finally, liberalism, or to put it more accurately, some liberals. We will make a quick survey of the first two positions, and then spend a little more time on the last group.

The Left

The government's program is obviously about as welcome to a broad variety of socialists, to Alfonsinists or to social democrats as a shower of icy water is to a cat. That is easy to understand, for we know that socialism in its general sense is directly opposed to, or at least highly suspicious of, free enterprise, the market economy, and the state reduced to its minimal expression.

Every liberal conscience is certain that this position is totally wrong, as the leaders of the Soviet Union and of the nations within its vast sphere of influence have recently been learning. But if there is a mistake here, there is also consistency: through their criticisms, communists, democratic socialists and social democrats show that they are being consistent with their deeply felt convictions. (Alfonsin, for example, has been drumming his boring anticapitalist diatribe into our heads). If they were not enthusiastic opponents of the Menem program, they would not be who they are.

Radicals and Peronists

As it has since the remote days of its founding, today's radicalism is a sort of doctrinary nebula in which a certain undeniable adherence to the principles of historic liberalism goes together with a state provincialism of "Yrigoyen" vintage, in which it is not hard to find, mixed, the very Argentine style of tit-for-tat politics and a pale reflection of the old non-Marxist social democracy.... Angeloz and his people, De la Rua and his supporters, represent this position. It should come as no surprise, then, that their criticisms of the Menem program, less virulent than those of the first group, display a strong family resemblance to those of some Justicialist leaders who harbor a secret nostalgia for demagogic paternalism, regulation, and the systematic inflationism of Peronism as it began in 1945.

Both components of this group seem to believe that while times have changed—the events in East Europe have forced them to reflect and moderate their views—the Menem government should act with more restraint and with a more pronounced "social sense." There too, though less strongly, it is not impossible to detect a certain degree of consistency: if one is a Peronist from the early days and a radical of the old style, any decided move toward a liberalism worthy of its name must

awaken suspicions and lead to more or less harsh criticism. (Think of the vacillations in the ideological flimsiness of the Cordoban governor, and of the "yes, but no" of orthodox Peronists).

To this, of couse, we need to add all the purely political speculation inspired not by doctrinaire or procedural reasons, but simply intended to start disputes to get the upper hand. But that is another story.

The Liberals

How do liberals judge the Menem program? To such a question, the answer comes quickly: not all in the same way. Many of them, perhaps the majority, whether or not they belong to the UceDe [Union of the Democratic Center], after observing with inevitable surprise the change that brought Menem where he is now, simply decided that they were represented by this original president who arose from the Justicialist ranks. They reacted with a receptive mind and a spirit free of prejudice to this promising situation.

This position, represented by Alvaro Alsogaray—to mention one stellar name—was and is the following: since we were unable to make the desired change ourselves (in an electoral democracy, votes decide), it is good that this man from an opposing political party is doing so. The origin of the change matters little or not at all; what does matter—say these liberals—is that the move toward the attainment of the ideal we have desired for so long, almost as a utopia, has now begun. Reserving for ourselves the right to criticize, they reason, let us pledge our cooperation to this historic endeavor.

Other liberals, perhaps in the minority, including men of talent and proven integrity, people who have disseminated in Argentina the ideas which made West Europe and the United States great, have rejected both the man and his revolutionary program from the very beginning. They do not trust either one. They do not believe in the success of a government program hatched by a person who was repeatedly governor of his province in the name of Peronism, and as such took part in the traditional behavior of that party.

How can anyone expect something good from a politician who venerated the barbaric bosses and who was elevated to the presidency of Argentina by nothing less than the votes of citizens nostalgic for politics based on bribes? Of course, given such a background, which in truth is far from commendable, these doctrinaire liberals or "dinosaurs" have brought to mind a powerful reservation: searching carefully for the fly in the ointment.

The development of the program was in truth the opposite of a statist, demagogic, paternalistic Peronism. With today's new situation, people might almost think that, paradoxically, Peronism itself is presiding over the obsequies of Peronism. Given the impossibility of accusing such an unexpected policy of being Peronist, these 100 percent liberals, authentic idealists and men of principle, developed a plan of severe criticism which included the liberals who welcomed this innovation.

Stability? Yes, but it must be combined with growth; without the second, the first is invalidated. Privatization? Okay, but not as the Menemist government is promoting it, so slowly and sluggishly. Deregulation? Of course, that is what we so ardently desire; but as undertaken by Menem, it is being done sloppily and by halfway measures, etc. As we see, this is not supporting either in whole or in part, but rather criticizing in depth, as if the Menem program were a colossal and irremediable blunder.

Such Rigidity!

People who think like this do so with a rigidity that does not consider the current Argentine situation. This is typical of the doctrinaire in a state of absolute purity: what is not spelled out in the textbook is of no use. Forgetting that in election campaigns the purpose is to try to persuade people who are not already supporters, and to welcome them as brothers with open arms, they insist on pointing out the Peronist taint in the very man who, not with words but with deeds, is showing that he has freed himself from his old ideological burden. It would appear that in essence, it bothers the "dinosaurs" that liberalism—or something that fairly closely resembles it—should be reintroduced among us through the efforts of a recent convert.

That happens, I believe, because in them doctrine functions as a screen that obstructs a clear vision of reality and the correct evaluation of particular cases, including errors.

I have just briefly touched upon a quite important issue, one to which an entire article should be devoted.

Bolivia

Paz Urges Cooperation at U.S. Antidrug Summit

PY2402222292 Madrid EFE in Spanish
1522 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Report by Alejandro Varela]

[Text] La Paz, 24 Feb (EFE)—Bolivian President Jaime Paz Zamora stated today that within the U.S. Administration, "there are still some hardliners who think drug trafficking can only be solved with clubs and guns."

"In the antidrug campaign, as well as in the Cold War, there are hawks and doves, although President George Bush is among the doves," added President Paz Zamora with satisfaction in exclusive remarks to EFE a day before leaving for the United States to participate in the antidrug summit in San Antonio (Texas).

This summit, the second after a 1990 summit held in Cartagena de Indias (Colombia), will gather on 26 and 27 February, U.S. President George Bush, Colombian President Cesar Gaviria, Peruvian President Alberto

Fujimori, and Bolivian President Jaime Paz Zamora. Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari and Ecuadoran President Rodrigo Borja will join them on this occasion.

The Bolivian president hopes that the discussions in San Antonio will further develop the alternative development program to replace coca plantations as the main strategy against drug trafficking, as opposed to repressive measures.

He also expressed the hope that "greater cooperation" in the antidrug effort "will be achieved with Europe, Japan, and Canada," which is essential, and that "countries producing chemical precursors will also be involved" in controlling their surpluses, which are used in the manufacture of cocaine.

"Cocaine equals coca plus precursors, and the country that produces coca in excess is as responsible as that which produces chemicals in excess," Paz Zamora said.

The Bolivian president considers the fact that this summit will be held in the United States "very positive" because U.S. public opinion will have an opportunity to be closer to the efforts of their southern neighbors in the antidrug struggle.

He also praised the inclusion of Mexico, Ecuador, and Venezuela because "as our position becomes more multilateral, conditions will be better for demanding the United States to control drug consumption to the same extent that the United States demands the reduction of coca production."

The most important aspect for Bolivia in this effort, however, is the alternative development strategy, which "supposes an investment of resources, an opening of the market, and a liberalization of trade," the president explained. He said that his country does not ask for "U.S. money or subsidies for Bolivian products, but for private investments."

He said that this strategy is included in the Americas Initiative that President Bush proposed three months after the Cartagena summit after listening to the Bolivian alternative development theory to face the drug trafficking problem in countries producing coca.

The Bolivian president said that the Americas Initiative is the most important result, although indirect, of the Cartagena summit and the great hope to resolve the drug trafficking problem.

Paz Zamora considered the progress achieved since the Cartagena summit" indubitable", where the first great success, according to him, was that all producer countries, intermediary countries, and drug consuming countries accepted the principle of mutual responsibility in drug trafficking.

He explained, however, that in his country, the antidrug campaign "is still traumatic for the people, who must understand that coca, the raw material for cocaine production, which has always been considered something good, is now considered bad."

He added that the "coca Wall Street" is found in the Bolivian region of Chapare, where the peasants set coca prices, and "sell it without knowing whether it will be used for traditional, legal use or for international drug trafficking."

Opposition to Foreign Pressure

PY2402202592 Madrid EFE in Spanish
1927 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] The newspaper HOY has reported that the Bolivian Armed Forces feel that the antidrug fight "must be defined by each individual nation without any impositions or recommendations."

The La Paz daily states that Bolivian officers today, 24 February, will hand a document to Bolivian President Jaime Paz Zamora establishing their position regarding the antidrug struggle and the proposal that must be taken to the Cartagena-2 summit in Texas on Wednesday, 26 February.

The document states that there should be "no pressure from any foreign country on the guidelines to be followed by the Bolivian Armed Forces in that field."

The newspaper mentions that the document fully rejects the pressure being applied by the United States to condition the delivery of aid to the Army to its participation in the antidrug campaign, adding that Bolivian officers are reluctant to participate in such tasks "without a pre-established program" because this task could discredit the Armed Forces.

Colonel Max Quiroga, the Armed Forces press attache, told EFE that he knows "nothing" about the document, adding that the question should be addressed to the office of the commander in chief, where an official refused to confirm or deny the report.

The newspaper cites "Armed Forces sources" over a secret meeting of the military command which lasted 5 hours, after which "some recommendations were made by the military men which they want proposed at the Cartagena-2 meeting."

The Bolivian president will leave tomorrow, 25 February, for San Antonio, Texas, to participate in the meeting on drug trafficking together with the Colombian President Oscar Gaviria, Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, Ecuadoran President Rodrigo Borja, Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, U.S. President George Bush, and a representative of Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez.

In May 1990, Bolivia and the United States signed an antidrug agreement. Annex 3 of that agreement provides for Army participation in the antidrug campaign in exchange of a U.S. aid estimated at $35 million.

The Air Force and the Navy are currently providing logistic support to the elite troops of the Bolivian police that are trained by the DEA and in charge of fighting drug trafficking.

U.S. experts trained two Army units—a total of some 800 men—in antidrug tactics during 1991.

ADN Internal Elections Postponed Until 1993

PY2402193592 La Paz Television Boliviana Network in Spanish 1700 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] The internal elections of the ADN [National Democratic Action] executive board have been postponed until 1993.

General Hugo Banzer Suarez has stated that because this is a pre-electoral year, the party executive board will be preparing the electoral campaign for the forthcoming national elections. He said that he is satisfied with the work of the top ADN leaders. General Suarez said:

[Begin recording] We are in a pre-electoral year and the internal elections that were to have been held this year have been postponed until 1993. The work of our party leaders is good. We believe that this is not the best time to hold internal elections because we need our leaders to prepare for the national elections. For this reason, we have decided to postpone our party's internal elections. We are establishing a solid structure for the party that will allow us prepare a good electoral campaign. [end recording]

Chile

Defense Minister Calls Cheney Visit 'Fruitful'

PY2502013892 Santiago Television Nacional de Chile Network in Spanish 2330 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] U.S. Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney left our country today. General Augusto Pinochet did not participate in Cheney's meetings with the Armed Forces chiefs.

Cheney's three-day visit to Chile ended today. During his stay, he met with a delegation of Chilean officers who served with a UN peace mission to the Persian Gulf.

At the Santiago airport, Cheney, along with Defense Minister Patricio Rojas, received the appropriate military honors. Rojas described Cheney's visit as fruitful.

[Begin Rojas recording] We talked about the logistic needs of the Chilean Armed Forces. All these needs have peaceful goals. I believe that the announcement of another Hercules and a tanker for the Navy represents a definitive result. [end recording]

Concerning a constitutional amendment to replace the commanders in chief, Rojas pointed out that this is just part of a pending situation.

[Begin recording] [Rojas] I have not made any announcement. I have just recalled a pending issue of the Chilean institutional system, an issue, among others, that was recalled by President Aylwin in his 21 May speech and in an interview at the end of his work period this year before beginning his vacation.

[Unidentified reporter] Why didn't he meet with General Pinochet?

[Rojas] This is something that you should ask Gen. Pinochet. The Army commander in chief was invited, Miss, and I frankly believe that any situation involving Gen. Pinochet is not a topic for discussion during this visit.

The U.S. secretary of defense was my guest as defense minister and the people who participated in the meetings appropriately represented the Armed Forces. [end recording]

Silva Confirms Honecker Admitted To Hospital

PY2402173192 Santiago Radio Chilena Network in Spanish 1600 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Relay from Foreign Ministry by Pablo de La Vega]

[Text] Chilean Foreign Minister Enrique Silva Cimma has confirmed press reports that former GDR leader Erich Honecker has been transferred from the Chilean Embassy in Moscow to the Botkin Hospital. He said:

[Begin recording] This morning Erich Honecker was finally taken to the Botkin Hospital which is used by diplomats in Moscow.

Mr. Honecker traveled in an official vehicle of the Chilean Embassy, bearing a Chilean flag, accompanied by his wife and the adviser of the Chilean Embassy in Moscow. [end recording]

Silva Cimma added that he has instructed Chilean embassies throughout the world to divulge only information issued from Santiago regarding the Honecker case.

Changing the subject, Silva Cimma noted the success of the OAS negotiations regarding Haiti. He noted that President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's authority will be respected in Haiti and that an amnesty for all military men involved in the coup will be issued.

Honecker Still 'Guest'

PY2502003392 Santiago Radio Cooperativa Network in Spanish 2200 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Report by Manola Robles; passages within quotation marks are recorded]

[Text] Enrique Correa, minister secretary general of government, said this afternoon that Erich Honecker is still a guest at the Chilean Embassy and is still under our protection although he has been hospitalized. Correa

explained the concern of President Aylwin over the situation created by Honecker's hospitalization in Moscow.

"We take the opportunity to assert, on behalf of the president and the government, that any solution to Mr. Honecker's situation will have to be agreed to by all those involved: Chile, where Mr. Honecker is a guest in our embassy; Germany, which requests his presence for a trial; and Russia, where Mr. Honecker has been residing and where our embassy is situated. Even though Mr. Honecker is now hospitalized, he continues to be our guest."

Correa insisted that Honecker's hospitalization does not change his status. Asked whether the possibility of Honecker traveling to Chile has been discarded, Correa answered:

"It has not been discarded, it must be approved by Russian and German officials."

He added that various alternatives have been discussed with the Russian and German Governments. He admitted, however, that there have been disagreements with the latter. He added that Germany is a friendly country and that bilateral relations are excellent.

"After he leaves hospital, Mr. Honecker will return to the Chilean Embassy because, even while in a Russian hospital, he is under our protection and continues to be our guest. Mr. Honecker left the embassy in a car in the company of our deputy chief of mission and under the protection of the Chilean flag."

Correa stated that Chile has acted in accordance with its tradition of hospitality. He pointed out that many Chileans have been guests of various nations that accepted them at hard times. There will be no change in Honecker's situation, unless an agreement is reached with Russia and Germany, as he repeated many times during his talk to the press.

Colombia

Government Declares Emergency, Raises Salaries

PA2402203992 Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish 1946 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] Santa Fe de Bogota, 24 Feb (NOTIMEX)—The Colombian Government on 24 February declared a state of emergency to deal with labor conflicts in the National Police and the public sector. The government also authorized salary increases.

In a press conference, Government Minister Humberto de la Calle Lombana and Finance Minister Rudolf Hommes reported on the salary increases, which entail an additional governmental disbursement of $783 million.

In a decree, President Cesar Gaviria authorized an emergency retroactive pay raise of between 26.8 and 40 percent for the country's 800,000 government employees and 200,000 police and military members.

The ministers said that Gaviria, with the support of his cabinet, invoked Article 215 of the new Constitution according to which the state of emergency can be declared in the presence of events "that threaten to disturb economic, social, or ecological stability."

Last week, the police rank and file threatened to declare a strike to protest the low salaries in the institution, where a policemen earned 57,300 pesos, a monthly salary close to $95.

The salaries of higher ranking members of both the police and the military were increased by 40 percent. The salaries of top ranking officers were raised by 26.8 percent. The government also announced an increase of between 10 and 40 percent in the benefits for policemen and soldiers.

In addition, urgent measures were taken to confront the labor crisis in the electricity sector after approximately 25,000 trade union workers threatened to stage a strike that could lead to the rationing of energy.

The decree also includes actions to tackle the new guerrilla escalation in several areas. Last weekend, 14 soldiers were killed by guerrillas in a dynamite attack on a road near Puerto Barrio, located 220 km north of the capital.

President, Peace Adviser Comment on Rebel Ambush

PA2402220592 Santa Fe de Bogota Inravision Television Cadena 1 in Spanish 1730 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] President Cesar Gaviria Trujillo commented on the latest massacre of soldiers by the so-called National Guerrilla Coordinating Board [CNG]. A military patrol was ambushed near Puerto Berrio and 11 soldiers were murdered.

A few minutes ago President Gaviria condemned the CNG's latest violent acts. He said such acts completely contradict the rebels' alleged search for peace and warned that the Armed Forces will continue to fight the rebels without hesitation.

The president commented on the CNG's attacks over the weekend of 22-23 February in which 12 soldiers and one civilian were killed. He said the whole country repudiates those acts. He added he completely supports the residents of Puerto Berrio, who reject the rebel activities.

[Begin Gaviria recording] Each time the guerrillas use violence, they reject the possibility that the dialogue might be useful and productive in achieving peace among Colombians. [end recording]

Presidential Adviser for Peace Horacio Serpa Uribe said on 24 February that the latest acts of rebel violence are a violation of the ethical principles of a peace process and of the community's rights. Serpa condemned the murder

of the 11 soldiers in Puerto Berrio and asked the rebels to abandon their intransigence and radicalism.

[Begin Serpa recording] It is a very serious act that has been condemned by all Colombians. The circumstances under which it was carried out are inexplicable, given the proximity of the next round of peace talks. [end recording]

Guerrillas Plan To Sabotage Municipal Elections

PA2102144992 Santa Fe de Bogota Inravision Television Cadena 1 in Spanish 0000 GMT 21 Feb 92

[Text] Leading government officials met on 20 February in El Yopal, the capital of Casanare Department. The public works minister announced new investments for the region. The central issue of the meeting, however, was peace.

Following the reinitiation of the Caracas dialogue, guerrillas have transferred forces to Colombian municipal centers to carry out terrorist activities. The government's Plan Democracy is aimed at guaranteeing the 8 March elections by checking guerrilla actions in areas with strong rebel influence.

The military strategy of the Guerrilla Coordinating Board has definitely changed. According to the Army, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and the National Liberation Army are operating small mobile commando units that facilitate improved mobility, surprise attacks, and rapid withdrawals. They can avoid clashes with the Armed Forces and can intimidate civilians that way.

The Army believes the guerrillas, on the threshold of new talks with the government, are preparing for war, not peace.

[Begin recording] [General Luis Eduardo Roca] We do not know if the talks will have the effect all Colombians want.

[Gen. Manuel Alberto Murillo] The dialogue is a political process that does not interfere with the military process for controlling all the regions. [end recording]

One of the major problems for the people of Casanare is Cuisiana. Its oil, instead of being a source of peace, has aroused ambitions, heightened the cost of living, and attracted an avalanche of fortune seekers.

[Begin Casanares Governor Oscar Wilche Carreno recording] We have noticed how the issue of the ground below Cuisiana has been introduced in the Caracas dialogue. [end recording]

Colombia has placed its hopes in the Cuisiana oil wells, but Casanare is enduring the uncertainties that wealth brings.

Government Demands Rebels Respect Agreements

PA2102150792 Santa Fe de Bogota Emisoras Caracol Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 21 Feb 92

[Text] Santa Fe de Bogota—The government has demanded that the Simon Bolivar National Guerrilla Coordinating Board respect the agreements signed in Caracas and cease hostilities during the electoral period. Hector Riveros, who is the deputy government minister and the democracy program coordinator for eastern Colombia, demanded that the guerrillas comply with the cease-fire. That topic will be the central issue at the talks to be renewed in Caracas on 24 February. Riveros stated: Colombians have unfortunately had to see how the rebels continue the violence in the country, despite the agreements. The official reported that the negotiation teams for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and Army of National Liberation will begin transferring to Caracas on 21 February.

Defense, Police Chiefs Announce Measures

PA2402175092 Santa Fe de Bogota EL NUEVO SIGLO in Spanish 18 Feb 92 pp 1A, 7A

[Text] The national government announced on 17 February that any policeman that participates in illegal activities or is found guilty of abuse or negligence while on duty will be immediately removed from his post—not transferred—without detriment to the legal procedures in the case.

That announcement was made by Defense Minister Rafael Pardo Rueda and National Police Director General Miguel Antonio Gomez Padilla at the inauguration of the National Police school directors and department commanders summit meeting.

"The corp is obligated to notify the legal authorities in all cases where policemen are removed from duty by an official decision. No abuse will be tolerated among National Police members," Minister Pardo Rueda stated during the inauguration of a summit meeting for commanding officers of all the different departments.

"The defense minister and the National Police director have always felt concern because we believe our society wants and needs an honest National Police force that should also be a friend of the community. The men in uniform should be respected, not feared, and they should guarantee the free exercise of all rights," Gomez Padilla said.

The National Police director also revealed that the corp'd discipline system is being reviewed and a series of measures will be adopted to prevent the police from violating their pledge, doctrine, and institutional philosophy.

"We will render it more agile, without violating the right to a trial and a defense, but the terms will be rather speedy in that concern," he indicated. Gen. Gomez Padilla said that the corp has always endorsed the

principle of "using a silk glove, but also enough professional capability to enforce corrective measures whenever necessary," when explaining that the measures announced by Minister Pardo Rueda have been fully implemented.

Defense Minister Rafael Pardo Rueda also announced a National Police training and retraining program to implement all the new policies adopted by President Cesar Gaviria's administration. The defense minister said the National Police Directorate General is working on a plan for all corp members to participate in a training program during the next 18 months. The program will emphasize human relations, human rights, and a knowledge of standards.

He said results will be evaluated; adding that a retraining program in police procedures, basic skills, and physical readiness will also be prepared. Pardo Rueda also revealed that President Gaviria's administration has created a technical bonus [prima tecnica] for National Police members in an effort to improve service to the community. Defense Minister Pardo Rueda explained that the technical bonus is linked to the member's service file, his time in service, and his evaluation in the training courses.

He also indicated that the social welfare programs implemented by the National Police for its agents will also be improved to fulfill as many needs as possible in that area. "Therefore, it is quite clear that it involves a joint effort to give the National Police the prestige it deserves; to make the people aware of the importance and responsibility of the corps; and to provide it with better human resources so it may carry out its valuable but difficult mission," Pardo Rueda said during the inauguration of the National Police department commanders and school directors summit meeting at the General Santander Auditorium.

Peru

Alan Garcia Elected APRA's Secretary General

Details on Election

PY2402144092 Lima EXPRESO in Spanish 16 Feb 92 p A6

[Article by Eduardo Alegria Martos]

[Text] Trujillo, 15 February—Former President Alan Garcia, who only a week ago promised to withdraw his nomination to become APRA [American Popular Revolutionary Alliance] secretary general, forgot what he said and agreed to take over the party's presidency. His reversal followed the approval of his nomination by the great majority of APRA militants who gathered at the Gran Chimu coliseum for the 18th APRA convention and who acclaimed his nomination.

The convention's decision occurred at exactly 1830. The decision amounts to what delegates considered a vindication of their leader after he was stripped of his parliamentary privileges to be tried by the judicial branch on charges of illegal enrichment.

The reelection aspirations of Luis Alva Castro were thus frustrated.

Obviously, Alva Castro received the hardest blow. According to all indications, he had been working on his reelection for some time.

His absence from the convention was striking. Alva never showed up. He returned to Lima yesterday after learning of his defeat.

Alva stayed at the Tourists Hotel. He refused to withdraw his nomination, as proposed by Alan Garcia himself, in return for the former president's support to prevent "Alanists" from booing him when entering the coliseum.

Alva Castro preferred to step back and withdraw without letting delegates see even the cover of the report on his three-year administration as secretary general.

The far-reaching decision at the traditional coliseum was made by a compact and noisy crowd of APRA militants chanting "Alan secretary, Alan secretary." This time delegates did not argue or get into fistfights as on previous occasions.

The single disagreement occurred when Deputy Alberto Valencia said Alan Garcia's acclamation violated party regulations establishing the one-man, one-vote system for the secretary general's elections.

Valencia's objection was received with all types of insults and offenses. The delegates' reaction subsided only after other delegates intervened to mediate.

Alan Garcia, who according to rumors arrived in Trujillo on 14 February—the day the convention opened, stayed at the house of friends and moved to the Tourists Hotel only when he was informed of his victory.

The back-door dealings with delegates throughout the 14th and the 15th was carried out by his two closest assistants, Agustin Mantilla and Deputy Jorge del Castillo, who became one of his closest supporters after he took over Garcia's legal defense in Congress.

Garcia's nomination as secretary general was clear among delegates at 2000 on the 15th. The decision, however, was made only this morning after Juan Ortega Choz, president of the 18th party congress, announced that 95 percent of the 1,500 delegates present wanted Alan Garcia as secretary general.

The news was conveyed to delegates before the beginning of the first plenary session and was received with applause.

In the afternoon, it was reported that the former president had conditioned his participation to the acceptance of Senator Abel Salinas Izaguirre as a third candidate. This condition, as far as is known, was received with mistrust because Salinas' candidacy did not make sense if Garcia accepted being elected by acclamation.

Things became clearer, hours later, after Salinas accepted heading the Conaplan, the well-known APRA Party Government Plan Commission that was so insistently mentioned during the five years of the APRA administration.

Choz announced the decision to the delegates and then together with other APRA leaders told the press that C rcia "had reconsidered" his refusal to accept the nomination at the request of the great majority of APRA delegates, who asked to elect the secretary general by acclamation.

This confirmed an EXPRESO report after Senator Mercedes Cabanillas' statement that "there will be many surprises at the convention," which only confirmed that Alan Garcia would be elected secretary general, thus repeating 1982, when he refused to accept the nomination but then reversed his decision "for the sake of the party's unity and development."

Call to Followers

PY2402154892 Lima EXPRESO in Spanish 16 Feb 92 p A6

[Article by Eduardo Alegria Martos]

[Text] Trujillo, 15 February—Alan Garcia Perez, APRA's newly elected secretary general, made a call to APRA followers, assembled here today, to drop electoralist positions and to be aware of the difficult times ahead affecting the country and the party.

"We must maintain calm because the APRA has a very difficult time ahead of it and we must drop electoralist illusions," Garcia emphasized.

During his speech before the 1,500 delegates to the 18th National APRA Convention, Alan Garcia said that he accepted the challenge of assuming this important position, suggesting that it would reduce his chances to win the 1995 election.

"I accept the nomination of secretary general. The risk is that Alan Garcia Perez might not be able to win the election," Garcia said, tacitly admitting that he will be the APRA candidate for the 1995 election, even though he said just the opposite only a few months back.

The secretary general, whose nomination was approved by acclamation at 1830, was received with applause and cheers by convention delegates.

His name was shouted in choruses repeatedly during his speech, which was marked by his characteristic theatrical gestures.

Garcia called on APRA followers to give a quota of sacrifice. He said the party's path goes through "its reconstruction and re-encounter with the Peruvian people, not through the election."

Garcia said circumstances have changed since 1982 when he became secretary general for the first time. "On that occasion I felt it was my duty to accept the nomination. Things are different now. I have on my shoulders 10 years of experience with government." But "I will not hide away," Garcia said over the chanting of the audience, which said: "Alan Garcia, the APRA trusts you."

The former president said that he had withdrawn his resignation "because he has a debt to the humble, to people in need of hope," the people with whom he identifies and for whom he will work.

Venezuela

Opposition Asked To Join 'Political Cabinet'

PA2402135592 Paris AFP in Spanish 0119 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] Caracas, 23 Feb (AFP)—Venezuelan Social Democrat President Carlos Andres Perez has asked the secretaries general of the main opposition parties to join his government in a "political cabinet" headed by "ministers without portfolios," Socialist Freddy Munoz reported on 23 February.

Munoz, of the Movement for Socialism (MAS), the third political force, and Eduardo Fernandez, secretary general of the Social Christian Party (Copei), met with the president on 22 February.

Munoz said Perez asked them to join this "political cabinet," which will discuss and draft policies and projects that have to be approved in the next two years of the Perez administration. During this time period, there will be elections for mayors and governors in 1992 and presidential and legislative elections in 1993. Luis Emilio Rondon, ruling Democratic Action [AD] deputy secretary general, said that if the personalities proposed by Copei, MAS, and AD join the cabinet, the government will in practice create an opening to the opposition.

Caracas daily EL NACIONAL reported on 24 February that Perez is trying to establish a coalition government after the opposition asked for a "broad base" or "national unity," government, but declined to participate directly.

Munoz said the MAS leadership is studying the president's proposal and the party issued a statement on the nation's political crisis, which became evident with the failed military coup of 4 February, stressing that "the crisis still exists and seems to grow worse every day."

The statement indicated that "whoever fails to understand this situation is not only making a grave mistake,

but causing great harm to Venezuela, and, in particular, to the necessary defense of the democratic way of life."

MAS stated that the government did not emerge stronger after the failed coup and that the credibility of the parties, institutions, and even democracy is seriously threatened because the disintegration of the Armed Forces does not appear to be over.

The statement warned of the danger of turbulent developments in the life of the country due to the prolongation of political instability and did not exclude new coup attempts.

That is why the statement asked the government to make some corrections, such as raising the minimum wage to $150 in rural areas and to $200 in urban areas; freezing the price of gasoline; regulating the price of staple products, medicine, and some service rates; and upgrading mass transit services.

The official news agency VENPRES announced the president will speak on 24 February on radio and television to announce his economic and political plans.

* CTV President Criticizes CAP's Policies

92SM0240B Caracas EL UNIVERSAL in Spanish 12 Jan 92 Section 1, p 33

[Report of interview with Antonio Rios, president of CTV [Confederation of Venezuelan Workers], by Juan Ramon Diaz, place and date not given: "Economic Growth Has Nourished the Businessmen"; first paragraph is EL UNIVERSAL introduction]

[Text] The president of CVT (Confederation of Venezuelan Workers), the largest of the workers federations, stated that next week the CVT will present to the government its official position on the minimum wage, and its demands for increased remuneration.

CVT president Antonio Rios said yesterday: "As for the country's economic and social condition, given the picture being painted by government and its projections for 1992, we must be frank: Economic growth has only served to nourish and strenghten some of the bigwigs of the private enterprise sector. Certainly no benefits of this growth have found their way down to the workers, not even by mistake."

As the representative of the country's largest union, Antonio Rios has a gloomy outlook on the country's economic and social process. Hence the need for a frank and constructive dialogue with the executive branch of the government, the business sector, and the political parties and other institutions of the civil society.

"Our social and economic policies, whose results have been clearly negative for the majority of the country, must be revised, updated, and corrected.

"Faced with as bad, as traumatic an economic situation as the one this country has suffered," he says, "defense mechanisms must be set up to protect the people's buying power, especially for the 70 percent who live in poverty, because the rich do not have any problems. They have the means to pay and to prosper in a society where social injustice reigns."

According to Rios, a minimum monthly wage of 8,000 bolivares "is of no use at all," simply because the money comes in one door and immediately goes out the other.

"Therefore a real remuneration level must be established. What is being earned today as a minimum wage is being devasted by the effects of a cumulative inflation that needs to be a priority concern of the government, as much from the social and humane viewpoint, given the growing impoverishment of the people and the workers, as from the economic viewpoint, because it is not possible to upgrade the productive system, create jobs, and improve the people's quality of life, simply by debasing remunerations.

"Therefore," Rios adds, "we must struggle, and the CTV will not vacillate for a moment in the pursuit of its objectives.

"Even though the government just issued a decree with respect to an 8,000-bolivar minimum wage, our federation and union organization will continue the struggle. CTV is striving for remuneration in terms of a real wage that has been debased and deteriorated to the extreme.

[Diaz] How much would you like the remuneration to be?

[Rios] We proposed a fair, balanced remuneration of 12,000 bolivares, but the government did not take us into account. We say that 12,000 is a minimum because it can serve to balance ill-timed price raises....

[Diaz] But according to government figures and versions there has been economic growth.

[Rios] Well...yes, it is true, there has been economic growth. We do not deny it, of course; but unfortunately this growth has not been perceived by us, the working class.

It has benefited only a few, the rich, the powerful, financiers, bankers. Economic growth has served only to nourish and strenghten a few business tycoons, because the medium and small-sized enterprises have not benefited from it. In other words the powerful, the civil society's titans are the ones who were able to enjoy that growth.

[Comment by reporter] The CTV president repeated his statement to the effect that, in spite of official optimism, and government pronouncements about supposedly attained benefits not shared by the great majority of the people, and about having reached the end of the crisis (citing President Carlos Andres Perez' [CAP] most recent speech), and promising an early return to an era of general abundance and well-being, the harsh reality that besets the people is diametrically opposed to the government's outlook and perception.

[Diaz] Fedecamaras (Venezuelan Federation of Associations and Chambers of Commerce and Industry) is not very happy with this minimum wage....

[Rios] Fedecamaras is in a different position. Its members are economically better off; and if they do not pay, so much the better for it. The less they pay, well...the better for Fedecamaras. Now what matters is a better distribution of wealth, but not so that it ends up in the hands of the magnates and groups of the business and finance sectors.

[Diaz] The military also want a pay increase. They too are complaining about the economic situation.

[Rios] They are justified in doing so. They are professionals and are serving the country. They deserve an increase in pay. There are officers who live in difficult and precarious conditions. To cite an example, a lieutenant earns barely 20,000 bolivares. A captain makes 26,000 bolivares, and so on. The CTV supports any effort made to benefit the workers and professionals, and the military are no exception. They deserve to earn good money commensurate with their role in society.

[Diaz] Lastly, what is the CTV position regarding the minimum wage?

[Rios] Next week, we members of CTV's executive committee will state our position on this presidential decree. And we will put forward strategies for continuing the struggle to improve the workers' condition.

* AD Deputy Criticizes CAP's Economic Program

92SM0238A Caracas EL DIARIO DE CARACAS in Spanish 24 Jan 92 p 22

[Article by Alcides Castillo J.]

[Text] Luis Raul Matos Azocar opened fire on the economic cabinet and suggested that the National Congress name a commission to evaluate the government's policy and, since this policy has been disastrous, apply a vote of censure, thereby obliging the executive to reorganize its readjustment program.

The AD [Democratic Action] deputy made these suggestions on being asked about the fiscal deficit which the 1992 budget is undergoing and which was recently approved by Congress.

Matos Azocar believed that it was necessary to put aside useless debate by a Congress that does not act as it should toward the executive power. He maintained that this was a good opportunity to apply the concept of the prime minister which, while the office does not exist, would allow restructuring of the government without affecting the stability of the democratic system.

"Specifically," he said, "I propose that the National Congress in its extraordinary sessions name a commission to make an exhaustive evaluation of the government's economic policy over the last three years and, without forming any a priori judgment, reach the conclusion that the policy has been disastrous, that it has not achieved the goals set forth by the ministers of the economic cabinet, and also to examine the inflation indicators, the fiscal deficit, the commercial balance and the interest rates, and if these have not been satisfactory, to apply what the national constitution gives us a mandate to do, namely, by unanimity of all of the political tendencies to vote to censure the members of the economic cabinet, thereby obliging the executive to a fundamental restructuring of its economic policy."

A Rooster With a Turtle

The AD leader also spoke out against the so called selective sales tax which he termed a new invention in which a rooster is cross bred with a turtle.

"It is the very same IVA (Value Added Tax) in disguise. Here, instead of taxing sales or production activities, what we have to create are control mechanisms to tax nonproductive activities, the wealth that some possess in their estates, such as enormous stretches of land, speculative wealth in the financial sector, that is the kind of tax that Venezuelans hope will be defended and not that which affects the middle class and ordinary people," Matos Azocar said.

The rebellious deputy referred to other countries where systems of registry and control have been developed which allow the identification of income tax evaders. He then commented in the form of a serious anecdote that in a certain European country even prostitution will be taxed due to control mechanisms that can be established. I suggest to the minister of Cordiplan (Office of Coordination and Planning) that he take a little trip and look into these mechanisms to see if we can finally prevent tax evasion by the contractors who get rich without any means of control, which is the fundamental means of state intervention in eminently neoliberal countries such as England and the United States."

On the other hand, the government party deputy pointed out, when the National Congress voted for the allocation of resources it took a political position to prevent resources from the privatization being used to cover fiscal costs.

"I am not saying this to maintain an oppositionist or ideological position but rather in the strict sense of financial management. No one liquidates assets so that, as in the case of a company or a factory that originates from petroleum income, we would be liquidating the last chance we have to face the future if we use the resources of these assets to help to pay the debt of the contractors or to pay the debt of the creditors or the international bank, or if it goes to traditional consumption to increase public spending and causes artificial growth of the economy."

He spoke out, finally, so that these resources from privatization should be utilized in assets that generate

wealth, economic as well as social, the latter to produce technical knowledge that we need so that the country can be truly competitive.

* Poll Respondents Reject CAP, Support Caldera

92SM0256A Caracas EL NACIONAL in Spanish 26 Jan 92 Section D p 2

[Article by Alba Sanchez; first paragraph is EL NACIONAL introduction]

[Text] For the first time, the president's personal image is more negative than positive. Rafael Caldera has the highest percentage of all politicians, and appears to be ahead of Eduardo Fernandez as a presidential option. Cause R beats out the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) as the voters' favorite. The public's principal concern is the cost of living, followed by personal safety. The respondents rejected out of hand any territorial concession to Colombia.

According to the latest Gaither Poll, commissioned and paid for by the government, only 26 percent of Venezuelans approve of the current administration, while President Carlos Andres Perez' image has declined significantly. His approval rating slid from 43 percent in August 1991 to 35 percent in November of that year, when the interviews of 1,335 adult Venezuelan citizens were conducted in both urban and rural areas. According to the survey, Perez' personal image is more negative than positive for the first time (47 percent against 53 percent). The negative opinions are especially strong in the metropolitan region.

In addition, the majority (56 percent) believe that the president is not fulfilling his economic promises. Seventy percent feel that he spends more time on foreign relations than on national problems, and 57 percent believe the time he spends on internal affairs is insufficieint.

The levels of personal satisfaction among the electorate remain negative, and pessimism about the future is quite pronounced (53 percent). There is also dissatisfaction with the country's general progress, with contrary opinions rising from 44 percent in August to 49 percent in November. The public's principal concerns are the cost of living, the lack of personal safety, and unemployment, although the latter category has been declining.

With regard to the popularity of national political figures, Rafael Caldera has the most positive image; 49 percent consider him to be better presidential material than Eduardo Fernandez, who was mentioned by 31 percent.

Democratic Action (AD) as an organization fell from 35 to 31 percent in the ratings as "best party," while the Social Christian Party (COPEI) weighs in at 17 percent. The small parties have benefited most from AD's slippage, especially Cause R, which edges out the MAS with 8 percent, compared to 7 percent for the orange party. At any rate, 65 percent of the respondents expressed a negative opinion of all parties, mainly because they think the political leaders are incompetent to govern.

Other issues were also considered in the poll. The public is still optimistic about the prospects for the oil industry, and is concerned about the devaluation of the bolivar. Of eight international personalities evaluated, Fidel Castro is the best known, and also the one with the most negative personal image.

In connection with the country's international problems, 37 percent expressed the opinion that the dispute with Colombia is more important than the problems with Guyana, but in both cases the survey participants almost totally rejected any possibility of territorial concessions.

Here is a summary of the Gaither national opinion poll.

Rates of Optimism and Personal Satisfaction

The rate of personal satisfaction among the national electorate is still low. Sixty-one percent claim they are now less satisfied than they were two or three years ago, and only 14 percent say they are more satisfied. Just 20 percent of the respondents express optimism that things will get better in the next few years, while 53 percent believe they will get even worse. The level of dissatisfaction with the general progress of the country is also rising, with a jump from 44 percent in August to 49 percent in November.

The public's main concern is the cost of living (67 percent), followed by personal safety (43 percent), which pushed unemployment out of second place. Only 29 percent of those interviewed mentioned unemployment as a concern. Also mentioned were health care and public services (14 percent), education (12 percent), and general repudiation of the government (22 percent).

Tarnished Image of Perez and Administration

The survey indicates that between the end of 1988 and August 1989, public opinion was divided almost equally between those who approved of the government's policies and those who did not; in December 1989 the scales began to tip toward the negative. "Although there was a slight resurgence in late 1990 and early 1991, the ratings reached a low point in August of this year, and in November they were equally low: Only 26 percent expressed positive opinions of the government's programs, while 65 percent expressed negative ones." The president's image has also been tarnished. The negative opinions of his performance (56 percent) outweigh the positive ones (35 percent). For the first time, according to the Gaither report, his personal image has fallen below 50 percent. The strongest opposition is seen among those with higher income levels (76 percent) and more education (69 percent). The worst opinions were expressed in the metropolitan area.

The majority of the population (56 percent) believes the president is not fulfilling his promises, compared to 37 percent who feel he is. The positive views declined by 16

percent between March and November. In the metropolitan area, 72 percent complained of broken promises.

Caldera Leads Favorable Opinions

During the study, the images of 11 political figures were evaluated. Rafael Caldera enjoys the most positive image (73 percent). Claudio Fermin comes in second (57 percent), although his positive percentage dropped 10 points in three months. Eduardo Fernandez holds third place (53 percent), followed by Luis Pinerua (50 percent). Carlos Andres Perez comes in fifth, with 47 percent, followed by Teodoro Petkoff (45 percent), David Morales Bello (41 percent), Hector Alonso Lopez (37 percent), Carlos Canache Mata (36 percent), and Luis Herrera Campins (31 percent). Former President Lusinchi comes in last, with only 17 percent approval. In the contest for the best president Venezuela has ever had, Rafael Caldera heads the list (32 percent), followed by CAP (23 percent). Lusinchi is still rated first as the worst president the country has had (43 percent).

Moreover, 49 percent of the electorate feels that Rafael Caldera would make a better president for Venezuela than Eduardo Fernandez, who was mentioned by 31 percent. Between August and November 1991, there was a change in the opinions of those who support COPEI as a party, because in August, 50 percent claimed that Fernandez would be a better president than Caldera. On the date of the survey, 53 percent chose Caldera and 43 percent Fernandez.

Cause R Improves Standing

The preference for Democratic Action dropped by 4 percent, from 39 percent in March to 35 percent in August, and to 31 percent in November. According to the survey, COPEI has not benefited from the erosion in support for AD; the small parties have, primarily Cause R, with 8 percent, followed by the MAS with 7 percent. In the metropolitan area, Cause R has climbed from 6 to 14 percent.

In the vote by party, AD edges out COPEI by 6 percent (28 to 22). They are followed by the MAS (10 percent) and Cause R (9 percent). It should be noted that 21 percent of those surveyed did not express an opinion in this category, perhaps because of the deterioration of the institutional image of all parties. The percentage of the electorate that has a negative opinion of all political parties is still high. Sixty-five percent say that the parties do no good, and only 29 percent believe that political parties are the best way to alleviate Venezuela's ills. In the metropolitan area, 78 percent expressed a negative opinion of the parties, while 76 percent of those with college educations expressed such opinions.

The lack of confidence in the political parties and their administrations does not, however, mean the people want a military government. Nearly two-thirds of the voters are opposed to this idea, although a rather significant minority (more than one in four) do believe a military solution might be possible for Venezuela's problems.

Oil and Bolivares

Despite the changes in the price of oil, Venezuelans have traditionally been optimistic about the future of this product. Fifty-eight percent believe that the immediate prospects are positive, and 47 percent think the long-term prospects are also good.

A majority of the public is still concerned about the devaluation of the bolivar, and the degree of concern is as great now as it ever was in the worst times of the past. Ninety-one percent think the dollar will continue climbing.

Foreign Relations, Colombia, and Guyana

Sixty percent of the electorate believes that Venezuela's dealings and relations with other countries are very important for the country, although only 38 percent of those with no formal education hold this view. Nevertheless, even people who think international problems are important feel that domestic problems are still more important, and they are critical of both the president and the administration as a whole for spending an undue amount of time on international problems rather than domestic ones. Fifty-six percent believe that Perez is personally more capable of handling international problems than domestic ones, and 57 percent criticize him openly for spending less time than he should on Venezuela's internal problems.

As for specific opinions on Venezuela's relations with other countries, the United States holds first place both in the positive context ("the best friend," 16 percent) and in the negative context ("the worst enemy," 14 percent). Colombia comes in second in both categories, but it is mentioned more as an enemy (12 percent) than as a friend (7 percent). The majority (77 percent) expressed the view that Venezuela should have better relations with Mexico.

Many believe that both the conflict with Colombia and the dispute with Guyana over the Esequibo are equally important (39 percent), although a hefty minority think the problem with Colombia over the gulf is more important for the country (37 percent). Eighty percent claim to have heard of the negotiations with Colombia; 68 percent say they have heard of the United Nations' efforts to solve the problem of the Esequibo. In both cases, the electorate rejects the possibility of territorial concessions. In the case of Colombia, 38 percent say that Venezuela should reject the idea of negotiations out of hand. And if the commission concludes that part of the gulf should belong to Colombia, 70 percent strongly believe that Venezuela should reject the agreement, "even if it means that we will continue to have conflicts with Colombia." In the case of Guyana, the public wants all of the Esequibo. If the United Nations were to decide that all of the territory should belong to Guyana, 72 percent claim that Venezuela should reject the ruling, and if it were to decide that half should belong to Venezuela, 60 percent say Venezuela should reject the ruling.

Castro Best Known, Worst Image

Fidel Castro is the international political personality best known to the Venezuelan electorate (97 percent have heard of him), but the public has the worst opinion of him (40 percent negative), among eight international figures who were evaluated. Eighty-three percent have heard of George Bush, 76 percent of Gorbachev. Nearly two-thirds have heard of Violeta Chamorro and Cesar Gaviria. Less than half know who Alberto Fujimori, Francois Mitterand, and Carlos Salinas de Gortari are. These leaders have favorable images, with the Mexican president coming in first (70 percent of the 43 percent who have heard of him).

Approval of President Perez

	Feb. 1989 %	Apr. 1989 %	Dec. 1989 %	Jun. 1990 %	Sept. 1990 %	Mar. 1991 %	Aug. 1991 %	Nov. 1991 %
Performance as President								
Approve	n/a	46	51	39	48	53	43	35
Disapprove	n/a	44	40	50	43	39	49	56
No opinion	n/a	10	9	11	8	7	8	9
Personal Image*								
Favorable	73	56	64	52	63	67	56	47
Unfavorable	27	44	36	48	37	33	44	53

* Of those who have an opinion

This chart presents a summary of the opinions on the president of the republic, and compares them with prevailing opinions at other points in his current administration.

Opinions of the Best Political Party

	Oct. 1983 %	Oct. 1988 %	Dec. 1989 %	Jun. 1990 %	Sept. 1990 %	Mar. 1991 %	Aug. 1991 %	Nov. 1991 %
Democratic Action	48	52	36	28	35	39	35	31
COPEI	21	20	16	19	17	16	18	17
MAS	7	6	14	9	11	7	6	7
Cause R	n/a	2	5	5	4	5	5	8
Others	4	3	6	9	6	5	5	5
None/No choice	19	18	23	30	27	29	31	32

This table presents a summary of the percentages of "best" ratings for each party, and compares the current situation with that of certain points in the past.

Opinions of Prominent Political Figures

	Express an Opinion on the Individual		Favorable Opinions			
			Absolute (*)		Relative (**)	
	Aug. 1991 %	Nov. 1991 %	Aug. 1991 %	Nov. 1991 %	Aug. 1991 %	Nov. 1991 %
Rafael Caldera	93	92	72	67	77	73
Claudio Fermin	73	70	49	40	67	57
Eduardo Fernandez	83	82	48	43	57	53
Luis Pinerua Ordaz	83	78	45	39	54	50
Carlos Andres Perez	94	94	53	44	56	47
Teodoro Petkoff	76	74	37	33	49	45
David Morales Bello	63	61	28	25	45	41
Hector Alonso Lopez	48	47	20	20	41	37
Carlos Canache Mata	58	55	25	20	43	36
Luis Herrera Campins	91	92	17	16	18	17
Jaime Lusinchi	94	92	17	16	18	17

* Among the entire electorate

** Among those who have formed an opinion on that person

This chart presents a summary of the extent to which 11 public figures are known and their general images, and compares them with the images they had three months earlier. The first columns indicate the percentages of the electorate who express any opinion at all, whether positive or negative, on the individual in question. The middle columns indicate the absolute percentages of the electorate who express favorable opinions of that person. The columns on the right indicate the proportions of all those expressing opinions that have a favorable opinion of each person.

* Effects of Minimum Wage Increase Examined

92SM0240A Caracas EL UNIVERSAL in Spanish 15 Jan 92 Section 2 p 4

[Article by B. F.: "Minimum Wage Increase to 8,000 Bolivares Would Generate 54,000 New Jobless and 2.6 Percent Additional Inflation"; first paragraph is EL UNIVERSAL introduction]

[Text] According to studies by the Ministry of Labor and Cordiplan [Office of Coordination and Planning], this situation would be aggravated were the Administration to accede to pressure by the Congress to raise the minimum wage to 12,000 bolivares monthly. The government would have to disburse an additional sum of 38.095 billion bolivares, 222,000 jobs would be eliminated and the incremental impact on inflation would be 14.5 percent. It is asserted that with the minimum wage adjustment provided by Decree 2.049, plus the transportation allowance, no urban worker can fail to take home 8,900 bolivares monthly. This represents an increase of 36.9 percent.

According to the official projections, the decision to raise the minimum wage to 8,000 bolivares monthly will have an incremental impact of 2.6 percent points and will cause the loss of 54,000 jobs.

The analysis has been prepared for presentation to the National Congress, which is insisting on returning Presidential Decree 2.049 without action, recommending that the minimum wage be increased to 12,000 bolivares monthly instead of the 8,000 bolivares stipulated in the decree.

Under the subject decree, the total remuneration of a worker drawing the minimum wage would rise from 6,500 bolivares monthly at present to 8,900 bolivares, reflecting an increment of 36.9 percent, according to the official evaluation that is being prepared for the ministers of the economy.

This governmental decision, insofar as concerns the minimum wage alone, and not counting the proposed corresponding wage scale adjustment for the entire public sector, represents an additional cost of 5.6 billion bolivares to the Treasury, and will entail an inflation increase of 2.6 percent, and the loss of 54,000 jobs.

If the up-the-line adjustments of all other salary scales throughout the public sector are added to the total minimum wage adjustment, the cost to the state increases from a total of 5.6 billion bolivares to 36.486 billion bolivares, since this adds to the minimum wage increment an average increment of 20 percent for the entire public sector.

In the view of the executive branch, this minimum wage increase is manageable despite its negative impact on inflation and employment. However, the situation would be exacerbated were the minimum wage to be increased to 9,000, 10,000, or to 12,000 bolivares in accordance with the Congress' proposal.

Impact of Urban Minimum Wage

Minimum Wage (bolivares)	8,000	9,000	10,000	12,000
Additional Public Sector Cost (billions of bolivares)	5.6	10.4	25.732	38.095
Additional inflation (percent)	2.6	5.3	9.4	14.5
Additional unemployment (persons)	54,000	117,000	169,000	222,000

Increasing the minimum wage alone to 9,000 bolivares—that is, without a corresponding adjustment of all public-sector wage and salary scales—would result in an incremental public-sector disbursement of approximately 10.4 billion bolivares.

The impact on prices would be a 5.3-percent rise, and on employment, a loss of 117,000 jobs.

Taking the minimum wage up to 10,000 bolivares would produce an incremental cost to the state of 25.732 billion bolivares. And with the addition of corresponding adjustments to all wage and salary scales, the total incremental cost rises to 44.850 billion bolivares. The incremental price rise would attain 9.4 percent and the incremental job loss would total 169,000 persons.

Were the minimum wage to be boosted to 12,000 bolivares a month, as the Congress is proposing, the additional cost to the state would be an estimated 38.095 billion bolivares. An average up-the-line adjustment of 20 percent throughout the public-sector wage and salary scales would increase this increment to 60.848 billion bolivares.

The inflationary impact in this case would amount to 14.5 percent and 220,000 persons would be added to the jobless rolls.

The government has stated that salary-scale adjustments do not involve personnel of the Ministry of Interior and of the municipal councils, inasmuch as these authorities administer their own budgets.

The negative impact that a minimum-wage rise would produce on unemployment would be felt mainly in the sector small and medium-sized commercial and service firms sectors, which employ a high percentage of unskilled workers, and which are very flexible in the opening and shutting down of new jobs.

* Business Leaders React to Proposed VAT

92SM0238C Caracas EL DIARIO DE CARACAS in Spanish 22 Jan 92 p 17

[Article by Elizabeth Davila]

[Text] Approval of the Value Added Tax (IVA) [VAT] should not be determined by fiscal criteria and should be based on a plan for modernizing the tax system and restricting public spending.

This was the opinion of the principal leaders of industry and commerce in a short survey conducted by EL DIARIO DE CARACAS in relation to the observable official urgency to put the new tax into effect in view of the foreseeable budget deficit caused by falling petroleum revenues.

Rafael Alfonzo Hernandez, president of Conindustria [Venezuelan Council of Industry], said that several factors should be considered before approving the measure as it is unacceptable that approval of the IVA should be conditioned by the fall in petroleum prices.

"This tax requires an important change in the management methods of the state, which must reduce public spending to the real dimensions it should have."

He said that the measure should be based on a logical and specific rationale so that Venezuelans can understand that it is a measure which will benefit everyone, as it will take effect in two years.

"The measure should keep pace with the reduction of the tax burden on PDVSA [Venezuelan Petroleum, Inc.] and should be implemented under a gradual system which permits the reduction of the punitive burden of the income tax (ISLR) as the IVA implementation goes forward. IVA in itself represents an advantage as a tax collection instrument, since evasion will be more difficult," Alfonzo Hernandez added.

Aurelio Concheso, president of Consecomercio [National Council of Commerce and Services], said that a year ago his sector stated the requirement that any tax on consumption should be linked to a percent reduction in the tax on the petroleum industry.

"If the intention of the government and Congress is to maintain the tax on the petroleum industry at 85 per cent and on top of that to tax citizens, we are not in agreement. The aim should be the reduction of tax spending and not an increased impounding of resources without a concrete objective," Concheso explained.

It is expected that the IVA will take effect in 1993 to resolve budgetary problems in the following years, and it is precisely in those years when it will be possible to see what might occur over the medium and long terms.

According to Jose Luis Santoro, president of Fedeindustria [Federation of Industry], it is necessary to move to a modern tax system such as a tax on consumption or IVA, whose collection would be more equitable than the existing system.

"What we insist on regarding the IVA is that it have an initial level of 2 percent and not 5 percent, as is intended, since such an amount seems high to us."

He added that collection at the corporate level should not be monthly or trimestral, as this would entail paying taxes not yet incurred, since at industry level many sales take place over longer terms.

"The intention to speed up approval of the IVA because of the problem with the fiscal deficit must be viewed with due seriousness. The proposal must be reconciled with a reduction in fiscal expenditures and the solution of the country's structural problems, which it seems has not been done," Santoro said.

Failure to reduce spending could undo IVA's merit as a tax for the modernization of revenue sources.

The IVA would not represent a problem for small- and medium-sized companies if monthly or trimestral collections are not required and the initial rate is set at 2 percent.

* Construction of Major Port Under Way

92SM0241A Caracas EL DIARIO DE CARACAS in Spanish 13 Jan 92 p 18

[Report by Vinicio Diaz; first paragraph is introduction]

[Text] A new multiple-use port system is to be established in the northern part of San Carlos Island. This will give an economic edge to exports of products which are vital for the local economy, like coal from Guasare and petroleum from Zulia.

Quite soon, perhaps in five years, ships entering the Gulf of Venezuela will no longer have to enter the straits of Lake Maracaibo to know there is a port in sight.

A new port will be located in the northern part of San Carlos Island, right in the Gulf. It will allow these ships, especially deep draft ships which are unable to enter the navigation channel now due to the shallow lake waters, to anchor in a more modern port, one better suited to their capacities and requirements.

The name of this facility is Puerto Venezuela. To reach it, ships will set their course for the west coast of Zulia.

where this new port will operate, offering improved access to international maritime commerce.

The construction of Puerto Venezuela is now being promoted by the Unified Authority of the Lake Coastal Passage Area. This is an official organization operating under the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Renewable Resources. The organization was established in October 1990 by a decree promulgated by President Carlos Andres Perez.

"Puerto Venezuela will allow Venezuela to become more closely involved in maritime trade in the Caribbean, Central America, and the southern part of the United States," Alfredo Leon Ibarra, director general of the Unified Authority of the Lake Coastal Passage Project, states with absolute conviction.

Speaking in the organization's offices in the Llanafi building on Avenida Limpia in this city, Leon Ibarra says that new international economic conditions related to shipping mean that Venezuelan port operations must be upgraded and modernized.

He feels that building a multiple-use deep water port in the Gulf of Venezuela with a high-tech capability for moving both incoming and outgoing merchandise will generate savings, making Venezuelan products more competitive in world markets. The port will also be useful in exporting key resources like coal from the Guasare mines, and petroleum from Zulia.

An Integrated Port System

The principal objective of this Gulf of Venezuela deep water port is to have a port system that will operate in conjunction with the rest of the ports now operating in Lake Maracaibo including, of course, the Port of Maracaibo.

The feasibility studies now being completed propose that Puerto Venezuela have five terminals: one for exporting coal from the Guasare mines, whose production Carbozulia, a subsidiary of PDVSA [Venezuelan Petroleum, Inc.], will increase to 10 million metric tons a year in 1995, with the possibility of raising it to 30 million tons in the near future.

There will also be terminals for exporting petroleum, cement, refrigerated products, and for loading and unloading containerized merchandise. Space will be available for developing an industrial zone, bringing this port facility to the same level as most of the world's major international ports, which are associated with industrial areas.

According to Alfredo Leon Ibarra, Puerto Venezuela could choose to become a receiving port, taking in transoceanic containerized cargo and distributing this merchandise throughout Central America, the Caribbean, and the southern part of the United States. The feasibility of this will also depend upon the efficiency of handling operations, costs, and merchandising, as well as obtaining return cargo for the transoceanic ships.

Economic and Environmental Benefits

The studies suggest that this port will create a variety of economic benefits. The major one is that it will be open to deep draft ships, which at this time cannot enter the Port of Maracaibo, due to the lake's shallow depth. This will certainly increase the volume of export and import bulk cargo.

"Right now," says Alfredo Leon Ibarra, "72 percent of the world's bulk cargo is carried by ships with a capacity exceeding 50,000 tons, and only 22 percent by ships below this capacity."

"This situation," he adds, "keeps Venezuela, and especially Zulia, somewhat outside of international shipping, as ships over 50,000 tons cannot enter the Port of Maracaibo."

Another benefit this port will generate is that it will produce significant savings in freight costs and loading and unloading times, which should be substantially reduced. These savings will make our products more competitive in international markets.

Leon Ibarra says that Carbozulia now produces 2 million tons of coal a year from the Guasare mines. However, it plans to expand production to 25 million tons, by operating new coal mines in Cachiri, Socuy and Mina Norte, as well as other mines which it has identified. Three million tons are now being exported from other sources—Perija, Tachira, and Colombia—but exports are expected to rise to 6 million tons a year.

Carbozulia sends this coal by road to Santa Cruz de Mara, and then loads it onto barges that carry the coal to ships anchored in deep water. This rather limited system can handle exports of less than 4 million tons a year, but not larger cargos. That would require a deep water port with a shipping capacity of 10 million tons, the amount it hopes to export by 1995. Puerto Venezuela could handle these exports without problems.

This port will also benefit Venezuela's major national industry, petroleum. Leon Ibarra notes that the crude exported from Lake Maracaibo, approximately 1 million barrels per day, leaves by sea via the ports of Mirando, La Salina and Bajo Grande.

This constant flow of exports requires that continuous dredging operations be conducted in Lake Maracaibo's navigation channel to provide access for tankers. This is a considerable economic burden for Venezuela, and it also presents an ecological risk, both from the dredging activities, which cause excessive salinization of the lake, and also from the crude loading and transfer operations.

Leon Ibarra said that, despite the fact that shallow draft ships do use the Lake Maracaibo ports, "no alterations are being planned in the operations of these ports; they will continue to operate as an integral part of a port system whose major axis will be Puerto Venezuela."